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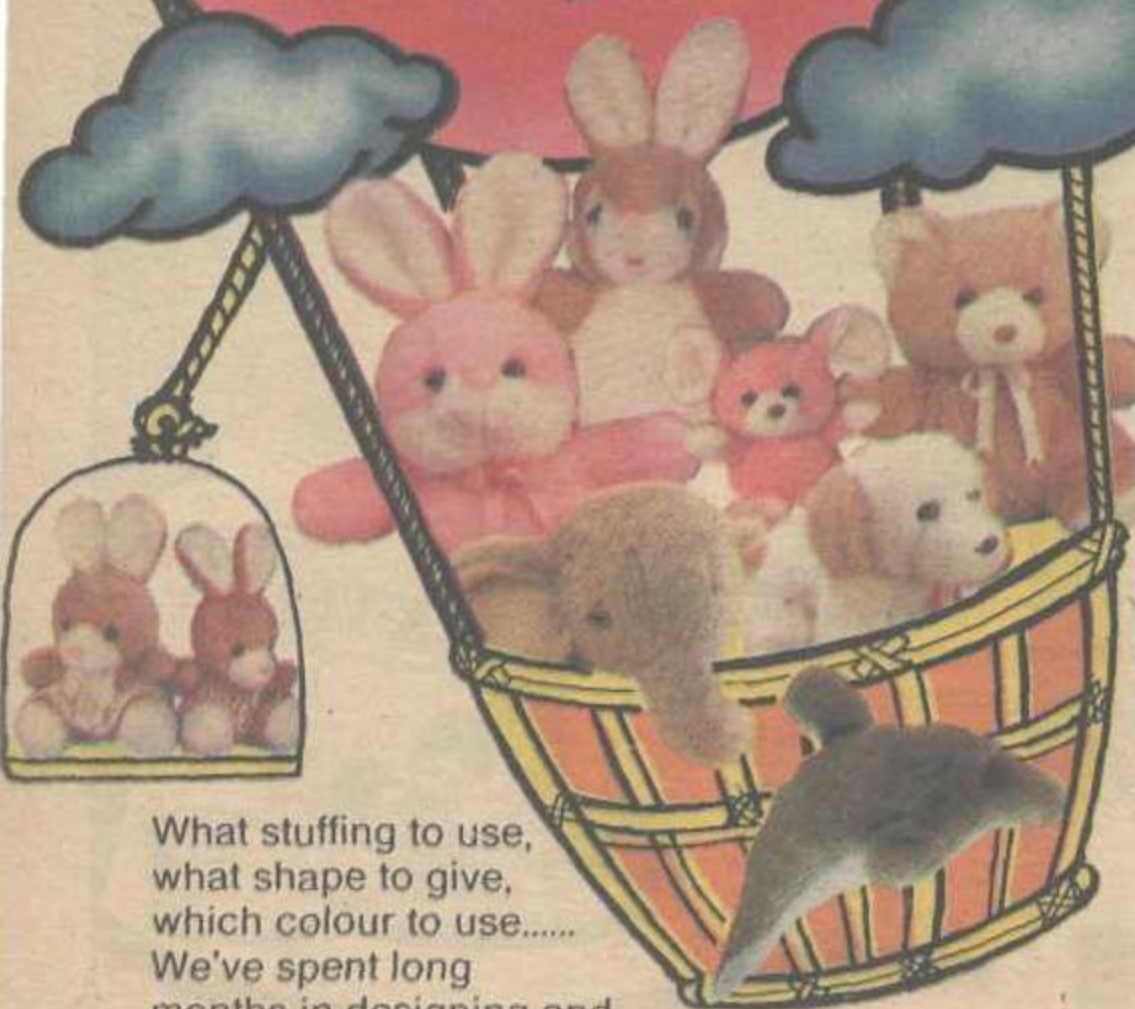




Oops!  
Kiddy grammar  
sure is catchy—Ya,  
they are here.

Bow Wow 'n' Floppy the doggies  
(wuff! wuff!), Jumbo the elephant, Wabbit  
the rabbit, Teddy 'n' Sporty your bear bud-  
dies, the mouse of your house —Squeeks,  
not to mention Flipper the dolphin 'n'  
Bunny with the Twins. They are all  
part of the CUDDLES family. And  
hang on—there's more  
to come.

Ta dum,  
They  
is here



What stuffing to use,  
what shape to give,  
which colour to use.....

We've spent long  
months in designing and  
crafting the toys which can  
take on the toughest torture  
test ever—childhandling. To  
ensure that they're safe.

The one thing we  
didn't do while  
making our toys  
was fool around.  
We left that  
entirely for  
your kid to do.  
Come, check us out.

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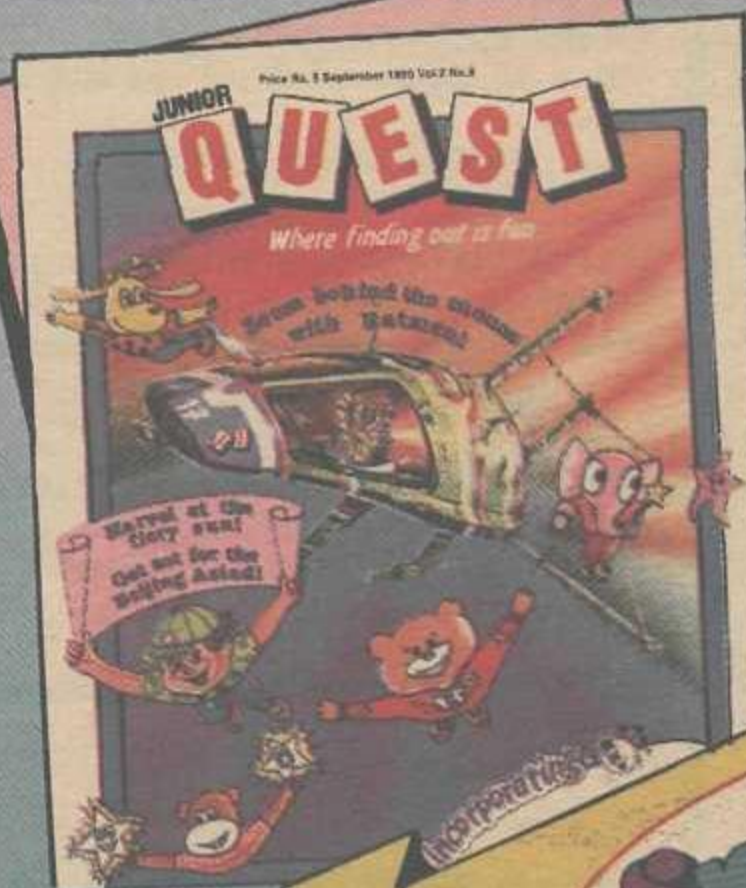
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# CHANDAMAMA

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and More!**

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Controlling Editor:  
NAGI REDDI



Founder:  
CHAKRAPANI

## THE SECRET OF PROGRESS

Every country in the world has a history behind it. Some aspects of the history are glorious, some are deplorable. India has much in her past to be proud. But it has also certain traditions which must be changed.

Today we enjoy a democratic system. Observers all over the world agree that India deserves credit for continuing. With her democracy whereas the ideal has failed in several neighbouring countries. We should cherish this achievement of ours. The beauty of democracy is, it respects and encourages variety. The Punjabis are different from the Tamils; the Bengalis are different from the Biharis, so on and so forth. But together they make India. People of no state can say that they do not have opportunities which are available to others. Prejudices may prevail temporarily in the minds of some people for some time, but they cannot last and they do not last. No state should claim that it is entirely different from the other states. It cannot be true. While no state can progress harping on the difference, the entire country can march forward by nurturing a sense of unity.



## EVENTS IN SURINAM

A name like Ramsewak Shankar would naturally sound Indian to you. He was till recently the President of Surinam. Surinam lies in the north-east coast of South America. How could an Indian be a President of that country?

Well, Indians constitute about one-third of the population of Surinam. Negroes and Mulattoes form another one-third. Populations of different other origins account for the remaining one-third. Indonesians are prominent

among them. The languages of the country are Dutch, Hindi, Sranantango and Javanese.

Surinam was a colony of the Netherlands. It became independent in 1975.

The capital of Surinam is Paramaribo. It has an area of 163, 820 sq. km. The population is about four lakhs. It is rich in rice cultivation and its mineral wealth.

India's relation with this part of the world is pre-historic. As the History of Mexico published







*Col. Bouters*



*Ramsewak Shankar*

by the Government of Mexico states, "Those who first arrived on the continent later to be known as America were groups of men driven by the mighty current that set out from India towards the East."

People of Indian origin living in Surinam today of course migrated there only in the recent past. They hold many important positions in the country's government. Like Mr. Ramsewak Shankar who was the President of the country, another Indian,

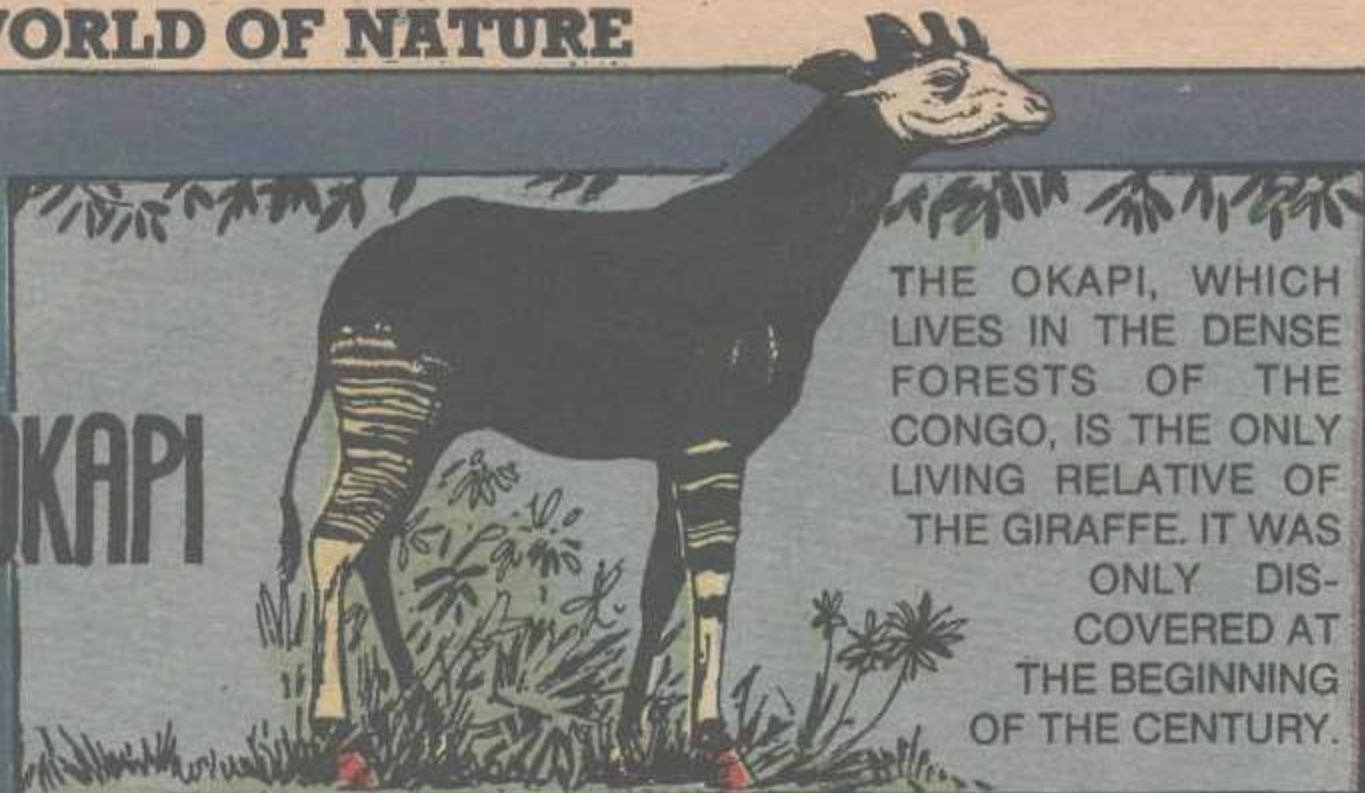
Mr. Jagernath Lachmon, is the President of the National Assembly.

Surinam is a democracy and there are 51 members in its Parliament. However, the army seems quite powerful. A few days before the New Year, President Shankar resigned. Reports say that he did so at pressure from the army, headed by Col. Bouters, a former track-star. But the army says that it had nothing to do with the President's resignation. The picture is yet to be clear.



# WORLD OF NATURE

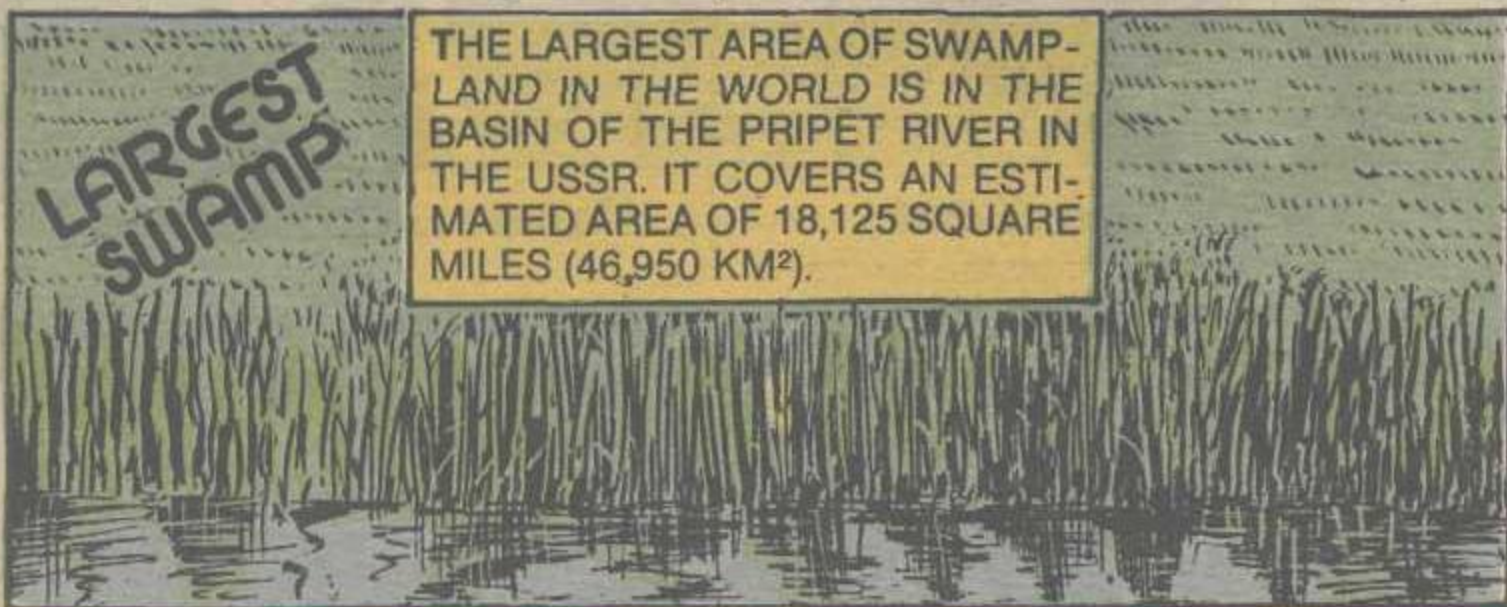
## OKAPI



THE OKAPI, WHICH LIVES IN THE DENSE FORESTS OF THE CONGO, IS THE ONLY LIVING RELATIVE OF THE GIRAFFE. IT WAS ONLY DISCOVERED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY.

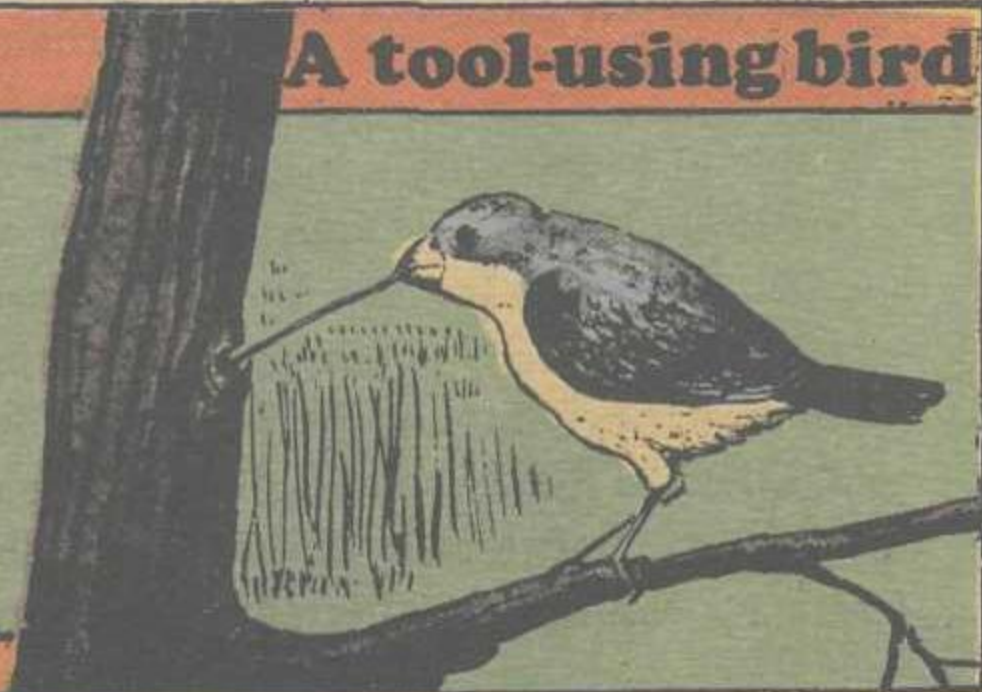
## LARGEST SWAMP

THE LARGEST AREA OF SWAMP-  
LAND IN THE WORLD IS IN THE  
BASIN OF THE PRIPET RIVER IN  
THE USSR. IT COVERS AN ESTI-  
MATED AREA OF 18,125 SQUARE  
MILES (46,950 KM<sup>2</sup>).



## A tool-using bird

THE WOODPECKER  
FINCH OF THE  
GALAPAGOS  
ISLANDS USES  
**CACTUS SPINES**  
TO PROBE THE  
BARK OF TREES  
FOR INSECTS.





## LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT

# THE HIDDEN ANGEL

A gentleman was passing through the streets of Rome. He stopped in front of the godown of a contractor who supplied stones for building houses. Looking at a shapeless slab of stone, he asked the contractor, "How much would you charge for this one?"

"Nothing," said the contractor. "Pay a little money to my servant who would roll it to your house."

The stone was transferred to the gentleman's house.

Two months later the contractor happened to pass by the gentleman's house. He was struck by the beauty of an angel's image carved out of a stone placed in the gentleman's garden. He stopped. The gentleman asked him to come in.

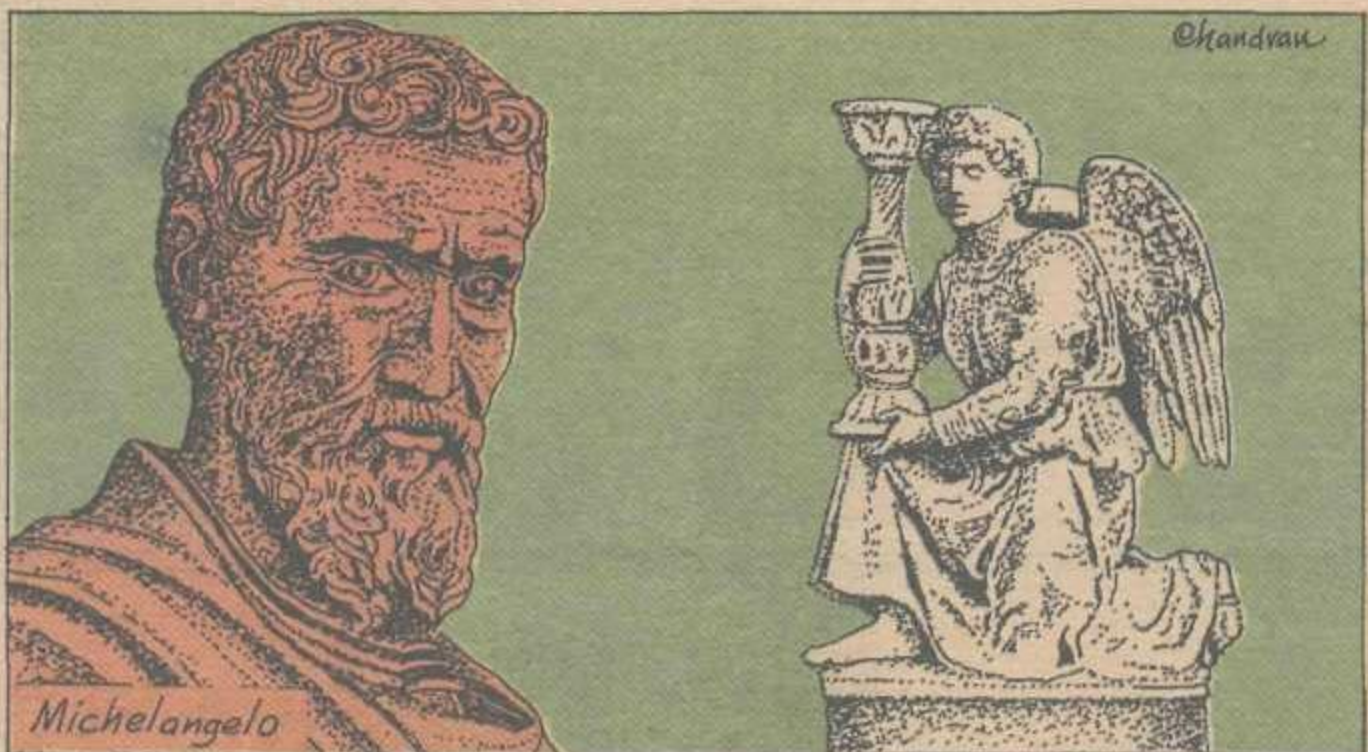
"How wonderful! Where did you find this?" asked the contractor.

"Don't you recognise this? This was with you, in the stone which you gave me free!" said the gentleman.

The contractor looked at him with disbelief. "Is that so? But how?" That is all he could ask.

"My friend! When I looked at that stone, I saw the angel hiding in it — but anxious to emerge from the hiding. That is why I brought it here and helped the angel to emerge with the help of my instruments!" said the gentleman.

The gentleman was Michelangelo (1475-1564) the great Italian sculptor, painter and poet.





SO HE IS A MERE BULL. I CAN NOW GET THE KING PINGALAKA INTO MY HOLD.



AFTER SOMETIME. THE JACKAL IS COMING BACK. I SHALL RETURN TO MY PLACE BEFORE HE SEES ME.



AT THE KING'S ABODE. MY DEAR DAMANAKA. DO YOU KNOW WHO MADE THE NOISE?



YES MY LORD. CAN I TRUST YOU?



YES MY LORD. BELIEVE ME! I WILL BRING HIM IN THY PRESENCE. WAIT HERE, SIR.



PLEASED WITH HIMSELF DAMANAKA RETURNS TO THE PLACE WHERE SANJIVAKA IS.



HEY! YOU RASCAL OF A BULL! COME WITH ME. PINGALAKA WANTS TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE BELLOWING LIKE A FOOL.



STOP THAT BELLOWING AND ANSWER ME! WHO IS PINGALAKA?



WHAT! DON'T YOU KNOW PINGALAKA THE KING OF THE FOREST?



YOU WILL BE PUNISHED FOR THIS. THE MIGHTY LION IS FURIOUS.



PLEASE SAVE ME. PRAY THAT THE KING PARDONS ME.



चिंता चिता द्वयोर्मध्ये चिंता नाम गरीयसी ;  
चिता दहति निर्जीवम्, चिंता प्राणयुतम् वपु ॥





Between worry and fire, worry is more powerful,  
for while fire consumes the dead, worry consumes  
the living.



SANJIVAKA THE BULL NARRATES HIS STORY  
WELL I DON'T WORRY I YOU MAY LIVE FREELY IN THIS FOREST OF MINE.



THANK YOU SIR!

IN COURSE OF TIME PINGALAKA AND SANJIVAKA WERE SO DRAWN TO EACH OTHER THAT THEY BECAME INSEPARABLE.



NOW THE OTHER ANIMALS COULD NEVER APPROACH THE KING.



MY DEAR DAMANAKA I I AM AFRAID WE HAVE LOST THE KING'S FAVOUR. HE IS VERY MUCH ATTACHED TO THAT BULL.



YES I IT'S ALL MY FAUL KARATAKA. THIS REMIND ME OF A VERY INTERESTIN STORY

WHAT STORY?



THE STORY OF DEVADATTA SARMA AND ASHADHABHUTI.

PLEASE TELL ME THAT STORY.



ONCE IN A MONASTERY THERE WAS A HOLY MAN NAMED DEVASARMA, WHO BECAME VERY RICH BY SELLING THE GIFTS OFFERED BY THE DEVOTEES. HE TRUSTED NOBODY AND ALWAYS KEPT HIS TREASURE UNDER HIS ARM.



A ROGUE NAMED ASHADHABHUTI OBSERVED THIS.



THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SNATCH AWAY HIS TREASURE—I MUST WIN HIS CONFIDENCE.



ASHADHABHUTI AT DEVASARMA'S.

OH I HOLY SIR! ALL EARTHLY POSSESSIONS AND PLEASURES ARE MERE DROSS. LET ME TOUCH YOUR GRACIOUS FEET, SIR, TAKE ME AS YOUR DISCIPLE.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOU, YOUNG MAN BUT...



साधोः प्रकोपितस्यापि मनो नायाति विक्रियाम्;  
न हितापयितुं शक्यं समुद्रांभः तृणोल्कया ॥





However one may try, one cannot excite a truly self-realised man; just as one cannot heat up the ocean by burning dry grass.



## TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH

# BEWARE OF THE OLD GENTLEMAN!

A.A. Gawai of Nagpur asks what is correct—printed at such and such press or printed by such and such press?

It should be *at*. A book available to the public bears an acknowledgment like this: Printed at B.N.K. Press, Madras, India. But many publishers put the name of their country first. Printed in India, at the Golden Lotus Press, New Delhi.

*By* is used to say who has published the book or the magazine. For example, this magazine is published by Chandamama Publications.

Who is a *gentleman's gentleman*? asks Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur and he wants to know if there are any other phrase relating to *gentleman*.

He is a valet—or a man-servant who attends to clothes and toilet of his master.

In any standard dictionary (not too small in volume) you can find all the phrases that relate to the word, but the one you may not find unless you consult a dictionary of phrases and fables is the *Old Gentleman*. No, the phrase does not refer to a gentleman who is old. It means the devil. Hence, do not refer to an aged gentleman as the old gentleman!

What is *Quixotic*? asks Nina Dharmarajan of Bangalore.

You could not have been unfamiliar with *Don Quixote*, the famous novel by Cervantes (1547-1616). The hero of the novel, Don Quixote, means well, but he is most impractical and he imagines danger where there is none. Quixotic is one who is an impractical idealist, who, sets great goals for the general good, but without taking into consideration his own capacity or the need for achieving the goal. In the process he makes himself a laughing stock.







# THE BANDIT PRINCE

18

*(The tyrant Vir Singh met with failure after failure. The golden idol he forcibly took away from Jainagar was lost to him. Princess Sukanya whom he desired to marry turned into a monkey — he believed. Experts who came to evaluate the costly jewellery found in the palace proved to be bandits!)*

“I am dying to meet my grandson!” exclaimed King Pavitra of Amritpur. He was the father-in-law of King Shanti Dev. He was talking to Vasant.

“My lord, Prince Sandip has taken a vow to recover his father’s kingdom before coming to pay his respects to you. I can assure you, my lord, you will be

delighted to see him. He is brave and noble. We the rebels rally around him. Now, with your blessings, we are in a position to directly confront Vir Singh’s army,” said Vasant.

“I am proud of my grandson, Vasant! But don’t you think that I have a duty towards him and you who are out to restore the

**ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL!**





kingdom of Sumedh to its rightful ruler?" asked King Pavitra.

"My lord, have you not performed your duty well? Who trained our youths? What was the source of our confidence if not the army of Amritpur? But, yes, my lord, your army has still a role to play in our final move," said Vasant.

King Pavitra's general and minister were summoned. All the four sat in a private conference for long.

\* \* \*

"A miracle once again, my lord!" It was Vir Singh's chief spy who was talking to him.

"What is it?" asked Vir Singh

gravely.

"The monkey has turned into Princess Sukanya!"

"What! Is that true? Where is she?" Vir Singh sprang to his feet.

"She is with her parents, my lord!"

"At Jainagar? How is it that Shankar Varma has not yet informed me about it?" asked Vir Singh in an agitated tone. He then called one of his senior courtiers and asked him to proceed to Jainagar as his emissary. "I do not wish to be harsh towards Shankar Varma. After all I intend to marry his daughter! Inform him that I will fetch Princess Sukanya myself. This time I will be by her side without a moment's break. There will be a wizard with me to see to it that no charm can change the princess into a monkey once again!"

Indeed, someone looking very colourful and calling himself a wizard had come to exercise some influence on him.

The emissary duly presented Vir Singh's message at Chieftain Shankar Varma's court, but he came back drawing a long face. "My lord," he informed Vir Singh, "I was insulted. That is to





say, they hurled insults at you!”

“What audacity! Who hurled insults? What were the insults like?” demanded Vir Singh.

“First of all, Shankar Varma refused to see me. A young man who claimed himself his advisor told me that...”

The emissary hesitated to speak out the rest.

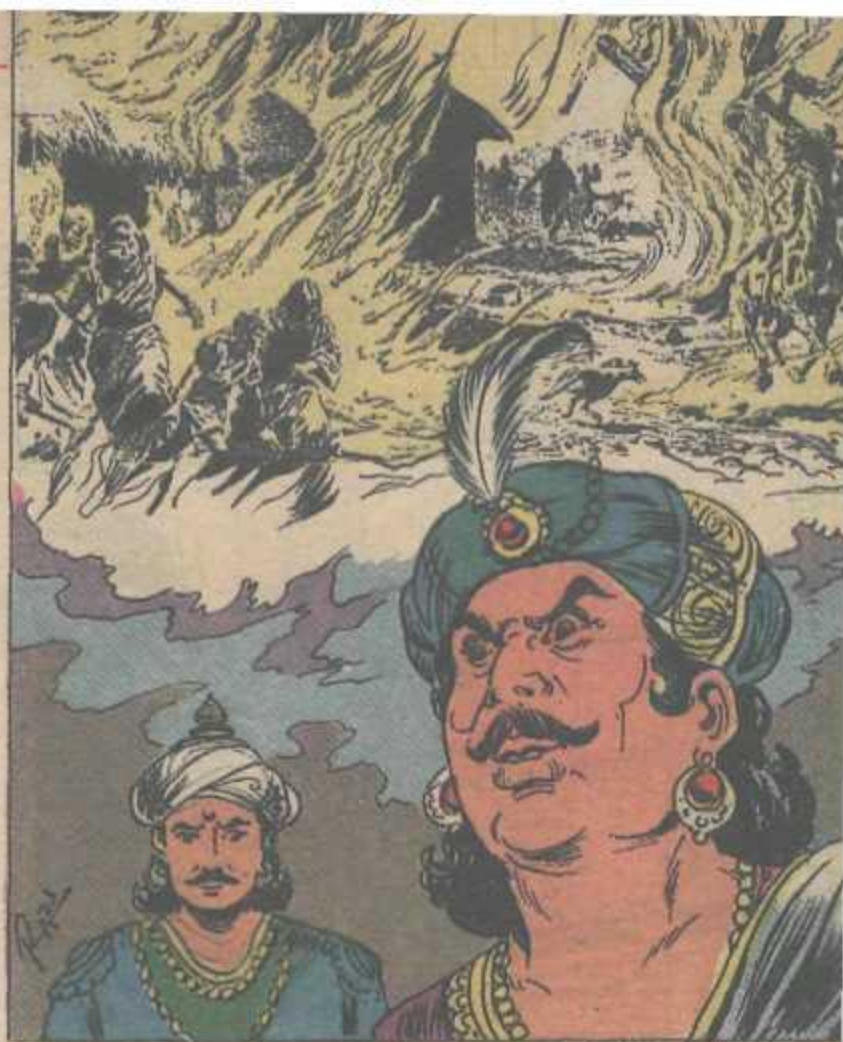
“What did he tell you?”

“That Vir Singh is a monkey to believe that Princess Sukanya had been turned into a monkey. Princess Sukanya escaped from his clutches. It is on her behalf that the monkey planted a kick on Vir Singh. Tell Vir Singh that we have nothing more to say!”

“What!” Vir Singh grew so furious that he stammered and trembled violently. “I will crush Shankar Varma! I will tear Sukanya to shreds! I will reduce every house of Jainagar to dust and ashes. I will kill every wretched man, woman and child of Jainagar. Yeh! I will not spare even their cattle and cats!”

“A great idea, my lord!” said the emissary.

Vir Singh was so excited that he had to drink three glasses of water before slightly cooling down. Then he called Jabarsen



and some of his confidants and announced, “We must march on Jainagar at once, come what may!”

“Only thing that would come out is, Jainagar would become a part of Sumedh! There is no fear of any kind. The conquest would give a boost to the morale of our soldiers,” said Jabarsen.

“Good. For a long time our soldiers have not laid their hands on anything other than their salary. As they run over Jainagar, they may keep for themselves anything they find. They must of course hand over to us all precious jewellery and cash.







Right?”

“Right, my lord.”

Because of his greed and his ambition to command the army to conquer a land, Jabarsen forgot that Jainagar had no army. His soldiers were not expected to meet with any resistance. Hence there would be no battle. Where was the question of victory or conquest without a battle. Where was the question of morale-boosting of the soldiers without a victory? It would be clean plunder!

Vir Singh, because of his wrath, forgot that even though Jainagar had no army of its own;

it could send an appeal to Amritpur to come to its rescue! But passion had blinded Vir Singh to this possibility.

But that fear came back to his mind before long.

As soon as Jabarsen went out to prepare his army for the expedition, Vir Singh called the wizard, his new adviser. After telling him what was in his mind, he asked, “My dear wizard, is there any magic by which our soldiers can act more bravely? I want them never to retreat.”

The wizard fondled his beard and smiled and said, “My lord, I can do something better. I will put a magic potion in the fodder for the horses. That would make them so brave that they would fear neither flood nor fire. They would never retreat! If the horses do not retreat, how can their riders retreat?”

“Bravo!” exclaimed Vir Singh.

Things moved at great speed. Even then it was noon by the time the army got ready to march. Vir Singh himself led the army, assisted by Jabarsen. It was evening when they reached the frontier. “My lord, it would be wise to camp here for the night. We will feed the horses with





fodder treated with the magic potion, tonight. In the morning one horse would be as strong as five horses."

"Yes, we should begin our attack only in the morning so that we have the whole day to us," agreed Vir Singh.

The wizard mixed his magic potion with the fodder. The horses were fed with it. Once again Vir Singh's emissary went to Shankar Varma's castle to ask him to surrender Sukanya, only to return after getting a rebuff.

As soon as it was morning Vir Singh commanded his soldiers to enter Jainagar and surround Shankar Varma's castle. "Our horses are powered by magic, be sure!" he assured them. "Victory will be ours!"

Vir Singh galloped forward, with Jabarsen by his side. They were followed by the cavalry.

Vir Singh found it rather difficult to control his horse. At first he felt happy, sure that the horse had become very strong. But he grew panicky when all the horses began to neigh in an abnormal manner. He looked back and saw that his soldiers were struggling very hard to keep their horses under control.



"Gallop forward! There is no time to lose!" he shouted at them. He and his soldiers somehow managed to reach the castle. But when they tried to surround it, the horses became too unruly. They stood on their hind legs and neighed and threw their riders off. Those who could not disentangle their feet from their stirrups, kept hanging from the horses.

"What is this? What did the wizard do?" Vir Singh asked Jabarsen in great anxiety. Both of them were desperately trying to keep sitting on their own horses.





“Look here, you rogue, I mean, Vir Singh!”

The voice surprised Vir Singh. It was a familiar voice. He looked up. The wizard had taken position on the roof of the archway.

“Can you recognise me?” the wizard asked, taking his false beard and his cap off.

“You! You wicked minister of Shanti Dev! You betrayed me, disguised as a wizard!” shouted Vir Singh.

“Yes, I betrayed you by making your horses unruly. But this is hardly any betrayal when compared to your treachery towards your master, King Shanti Dev,

and also towards me whom you tried to kill. Now ask your soldiers to surrender. If they fight they would all be killed!” said the old minister.

“Killed? Who can kill them? You and Shankar Varma? Ha! Ha!!” Vir Singh laughed wildly.

“Vir Singh! Open your eyes and see!”

No sooner had the old minister said this than hundreds of soldiers emerged on the parapet walls and on the roofs of the castle. Vir Singh was surprised.

Soon Shankar Varma joined the old minister on the roof. He said, “Vir Singh, we provoked you to march upon us so that we steer clear of a blood-bath. Let me inform you that King Shanti Dev’s worthy son, Prince Sandip, is the brain behind the plan. He is our master. Bow down to him, surrender to him, if you don’t wish to lose your life right now. There is no escape for you. Your army is surrounded by the soldiers of Amritpur—a land Providence saved from your devilish design. The palace in Shantipur is now under seige by the valiant Vasant, leader of the popular uprising against you. All the people of Sumedh hate you.



You won't find even a thatch on your head. Come on! Surrender!"

Vir Singh looked in all directions. Many of his soldiers were lying on the ground injured and groaning in pain. The others sat or stood, looking stunned at the turn of events.

"Soldiers of Sumedh! Here is your true master, Prince Sandip!" announced Shankar Varma as the prince emerged and took position beside him. "Soldiers, won't you greet the prince, the heir to the throne of your true king, Shanti Dev? Say, long live Prince Sandip!"

"Long live Prince Sandip!" the soldiers repeated.

"Good. We take it that you have surrendered. Now, lay down your arms. You all shall be pardoned—and shall continue to serve your true king and the people of Sumedh," said Shankar Varma. Then, looking at Vir Singh, he said, "Vir Singh, now it is for you to decide whether to allow yourself to be imprisoned and tried for your treachery or to fight! I will count upto ten!"

Vir Singh was still trying to control his horse. The horse ultimately threw him down and



ran amuck. As soon as Shankar Varma finished counting ten, his bodyguards surrounded Vir Singh and captured him. Jabarsen raised his arms in a show of surrender.

\* \* \*

Sumedh, Jainagar as well as Amritpur went festive as never before. The union between King Pavitra of Amritpur, the grandfather, and Prince Sandip, the grandson, was a moving scene. The prince was crowned the king in the presence of Sage Jayananda. The first thing the young king did was to visit the tombs of his parents and arrange to build monuments on them. Two







memorable events followed. His marriage with Princess Sukanya was one. The second event was a complete merger of Jainagar and Amritpur with Sumedh, for none

of the two rulers had any male heir.

King Sandip and Queen Sukanya lived long, adored by their happy subjects.

**The End**

## The Right Time

"How are you?" the old teacher asked his former student, a young man who was in business as well as politics.

The young man narrated his woes—how he was deceived in business and how he was sidetracked in politics and said in conclusion, "Sir, it is time to lose my sanity."

"No, my son, it is the right time to use your sanity."







## THE QUEEN'S DISCOVERY

**T**he young ruler of a kingdom in China had married a beautiful princess. But since her coming over to her husband's house, she never smiled!

The young king thought that perhaps she lacked some comfort. He saw to it that she had everything that a queen should have: a number of courteous and obedient maids ever ready to render her any service she needed, experts to cook the most delicious dishes for her, singers, dancers, magicians, and what not.

But the queen never smiled. The king also forgot smiling. The courtiers became pensive. They consulted the wisest philosophers

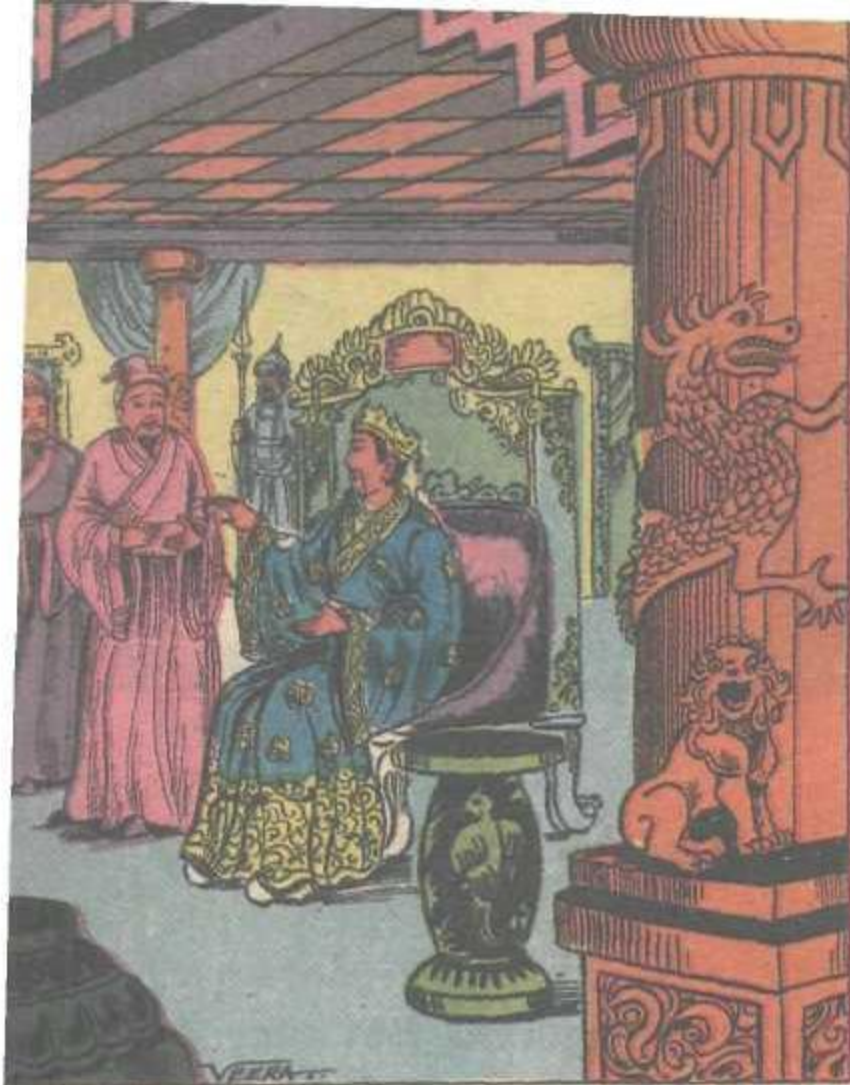
in the kingdom. But they too could not recommend any practical remedy. The clever ones among them prescribed impossible remedies.

When the king tried to find out what made the queen so gloomy, she had no answer. If the king persisted with his query, she shed tears.

One day the young queen sat under a tree in her garden, all alone, as sad as ever. It was time for her to have her tea. Her maids brought a cup and the tea pot and placed them before her. One of them poured the tea into the cup. As the queen would lift the cup, something fell down from the tree—right into her cup.







She tried to take the stuff out of the cup. But what came out was the end of a thread—the most delicate thread the queen had ever known.

Surprised, she kept pulling it and it became longer and longer.

“Is this magic? Can a thread of such excellent quality ever be possible? Perhaps a bird picked up the bundle from some craftsman and dropped it from the tree!” observed the queen.

“Your Majesty, the craftsman lives right on this tree!” said the maids, laughing.

“What do you mean?” the queen asked, feeling quite

amused.

“Your Majesty, this thread is not made by any human being, but by a kind of insect. What fell into your cup is a cocoon,” answered the maids.

The queen examined the thread and the remaining portion of the cocoon again and again. She ordered her maids to gather as many cocoons as they can. Soon two sackfuls of cocoons were collected. The queen tried many ways to unfold the cocoons in a smooth way and at last decided upon a certain method. She also consulted experts and made a loom for knitting linen out of the thread. She was fascinated with the process—and herself sat at the loom. What emerged is a piece of silk. She made a dress out of it and put it on.

The king was away from his capital while all this was happening. Upon his return he entered the queen’s apartment and was amazed to see her working at the loom! The moment the queen saw the king, she smiled. The king was delighted. Also, he was surprised to see the stuff the queen was making. It was so delicate, so beautiful!







The king employed some capable men to carry on a research in cultivating more and more cocoons and making silk cloth out of them.

The young queen was missing her parents and childhood friends.

That is why she was always feeling sad. Besides, lack of any activity used to bore her. Once she discovered the silk and worked on it, she forgot her boredom.

This is the story behind the discovery of silk.

## The Undeveloped Territory

The old teacher asked a former student, "What are you doing now?"

"I am seeking some undeveloped territory so that I can develop it," replied the young man.

"Seeking some undeveloped territory? Why? The largest area of undeveloped territory lies under people's hats!" said the teacher.







## THE TRUTHFUL

**J**ogesh Rao of Malligram was a wealthy landlord. He had only one son, Kapil, a very good-natured young man.

Now it was time for Rao to look for a bride for Kapil.

Rao had many friends. Among them was Vasudev, a seller of sarees. He was neither educated nor rich, but Rao respected him for his wisdom. He sought Vasudev's advice on several problems.

"Vasudev, such is your trade that you are bound to meet so many girls. From now on, please keep in mind my need for a daughter-in-law. Inform me when you come across a beautiful girl," one day Rao told his friend.

"Take the addresses of two of the most eligible would-be brides right now. They are Kamala and Vasanti. The first is the daughter

of Narendra Chowdhury of Shyamnagar; the second is the daughter of Jaidas of Makhanpur. Both are beautiful and both appear to be quite clever," reported Vasudev.

"I appreciate beauty and cleverness. But what I value most is truthfulness. Without truthfulness other virtues have no much meaning. Now, my friend, can you tell me who between the two is more truthful?" asked Rao.

"Give me a week's time and I will tell you," said Vasudev.

Next day Vasudev went to Shyamnagar. Kamala came out to the veranda of her house when she heard Vasudev's voice. "Have you brought something novel, Uncle?" she asked.

"Yes, my daughter, here is a saree of a very special quality. This has just rolled out of the





factory,” said Vasudev, spreading out a colourful piece with golden borders.

Kamala liked the saree and bought it. Nobody ever bargained with Vasudev, because everybody knew that Vasudev never charged unjustly.

While taking leave of Kamala, Vasudev said, “By the way, the price you paid includes the value of the extra piece which should have been attached to the saree for your making a matching blouse. But the extra piece, by mistake, is not attached to it. I will bring it to you after a week.”

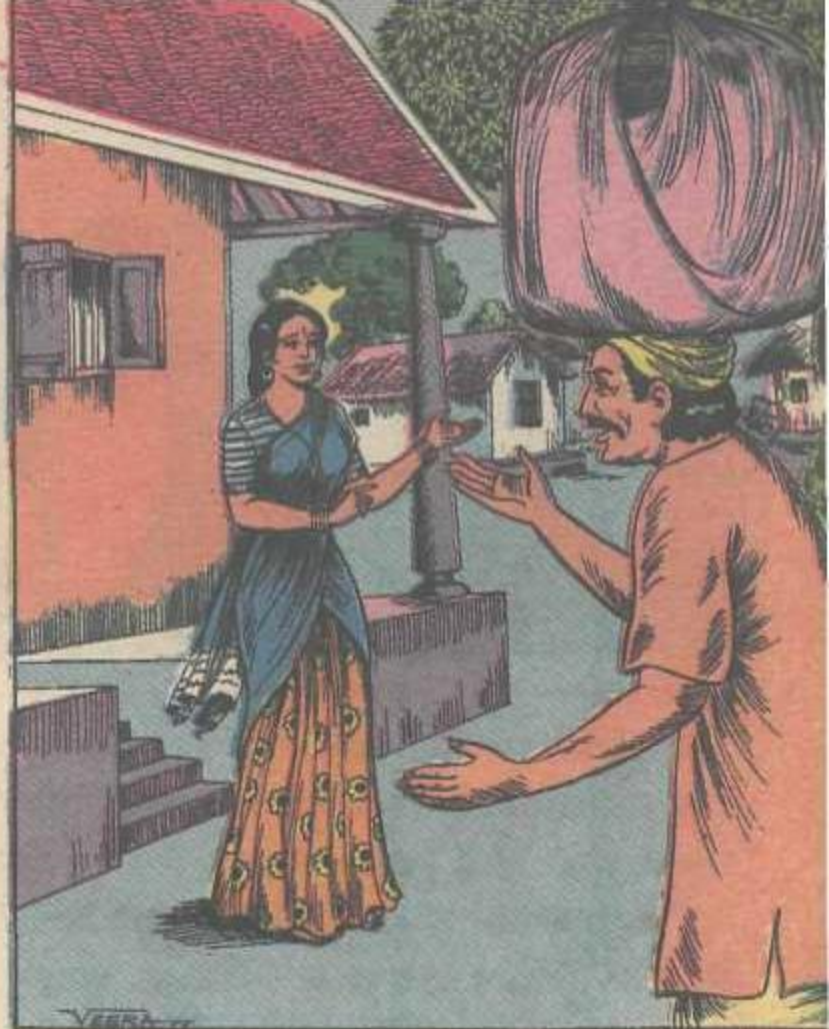
Kamala thanked him.

Vasudev then proceeded to Makhanpur.

As usual, Vasanti came out as soon as she heard Vasudev’s voice, for Vasudev came there only rarely. “Do you have anything special, Uncle?” she asked.

“Very special, my child,” said Vasudev as he showed her a saree of bluish hue. “This one is really charming,” said Vasanti and she bought it.

“By the way, the price you paid me includes the value of the extra piece for blouse which should have been attached to it. I will bring it to you the next week,”



Vasudev said while taking leave of Vasanti.

Next week Vasudev carried a piece of cloth to Kamala. “Here is the extra piece, my daughter,” he said handing it over to her.

“Thanks,” said Kamala.

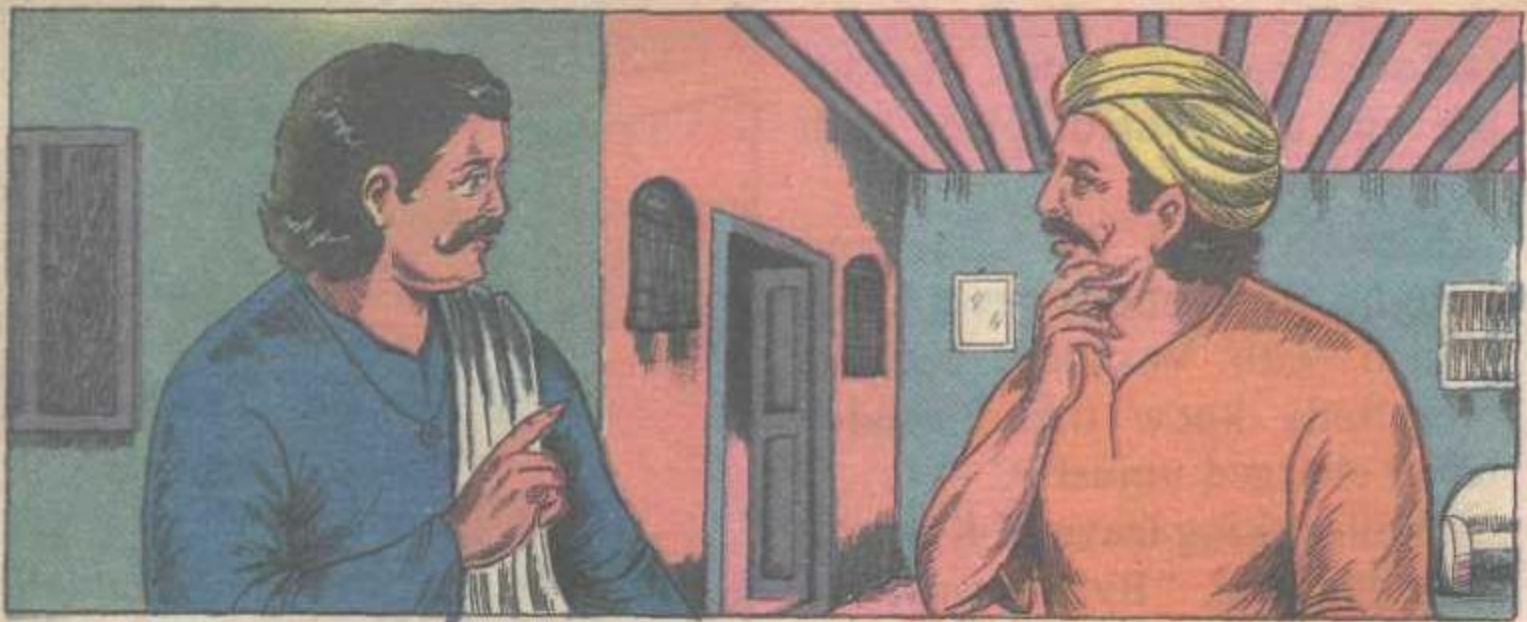
“Did you put on the saree? Was it nice?” he asked.

“It was nice. Everybody appreciated it,” said Kamala.

Vasudev then went to Vasanti’s house. “Here is the extra piece, my daughter,” he said. But Vasanti laughed and said, “What a forgetful man you are, Uncle! The extra piece was already







attached to the saree. I found it the moment I unfolded it. But by then you had gone away."

"I just came to check whether it was there or not. There was some confusion about it. Besides, I am growing old, you see!" said Vasudev, laughing.

"I am thankful to you for the excellent saree," said Vasanti.

"You will have reasons to be more thankful to me in the near future," said Vasudev bringing some mystery into his tone.

He met Rao that very evening. "Are you ready with your final report?" asked Rao.

"Yes. My choice is Vasanti.

"How did you test them, my

friend?" asked Rao.

Vasudev told him how both the sarees he sold had extra pieces of cloth with them, but how Kamala kept quiet about it and accepted another piece without any hesitation and how Vasanti spontaneously refused to accept something which was not due to her.

Rao was satisfied with his friend's finding. He requested Vasudev himself to carry the proposal to Vasanti's parents for her marriage with Kapil. The proposal was received with great warmth. Vasudev, as the ideal matchmaker, earned the gratefulness of both the parties.

Money speaks sense in a language all nations understand.

—Aphra Behn.



## THE INDIA OF THEIR DREAMS

### THE COMMON HERITAGE

Born in 1887 in Almora district of Uttar Pradesh, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant became a leading fighter for India's freedom. After India achieved Independence, he became one of the pillars of the country's administration. He was India's Home Minister from 1955 till his death in 1961. He was awarded the *Bharat Ratna* in 1957.

This is what he said about India in his Convocation Address at the Allahabad University on 21 December, 1946, on the eve of India's Independence!

"The history of India is the common heritage of all Indians born of common ancestors. Hindus and Muslims are equally entitled to share the pride of the glorious past of this great country. It is true that their religions differ but they have the same blood coursing in their veins and they have drawn their sustenance from the same soil for many a millenium. And in the long history of India, while religion has no doubt held a high place in the midst of all political storms and upheaval, tolerance for all faiths has been the bed-rock of Indian society."

### DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who invented the bicycle and when?
2. Who founded the first circus and when?
3. Who made the first film studio and when? What was its name?
4. Who founded the modern Singapore and when?
5. Which is the smallest among the States and the Union Territories of India? What is its population and what is its language?



# MOTHER DURGA



Rishis were the first makers of Indian culture. They were great personalities and they could see more than the physical eyes can see. Because of this subtle power to see, they were known as the seers.

They saw that the Divine manifested in many forms, according to the need of the devotees. One such manifestation was in the form of the Mother. The Divine Mother has

many forms too. Durga is perhaps most popular among them. She is worshipped in some of the great temples of India as Kamakshi, Kanya, Mookamba or Bhagavati.

She is generally viewed as the consort of Lord Siva. Parvati and Sati were Her incarnations.

She is shown with two pairs of arms, holding in her upper hands Vishnu's emblems, the conch and the Chakra. In her various mani-



festations (for example, as Mahishasuramardini) she has more than two pairs of arms.

Her vehicle is the lion.

She protects Her children from going astray and saves them from crises — if they ardently pray to

Her. She forgives the follies of Her children if they are sorry for them. She is the universal Mother. Her compassion is equal for all.

Elaborate festivities take place in Her honour during the Dusserah or Navaratri.

## NEWS FLASH



### MELODY AS REMEDY

You already know that good music has been found to help curing diseases. A team of physicians, psychiatrists and musicians in Moscow has established that music increases resistance to diseases. They have also found out that the folk music prevailing in the rural areas promote the health of domestic animals and pets.

### MAN WITH STRONGEST LUNGS

A 36-year-old Japanese turned out to have the strongest lungs, winning a shouting contest with a roar louder than a passing train. "If you want a war, you go," Yoshihiko Kato shouted. The sound registered 115.8 decibels, more than 15 per cent louder than the racket of a train passing overhead on elevated railroad.





## LET US EXPLORE THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

1. Who is the Egyptian writer to have received Nobel Prize for Literature and when?
2. Which language has influenced all the languages of India?
3. Which of the four South Indian languages bears the maximum influence of that language?
4. Apart from Sanskrit, which Indian language has a grammar written 2,500 years ago?
5. What is the language spoken in Jammu and Kashmir?
6. What is the oldest existent work in Sanskrit?

### ANSWERS

#### DO YOU KNOW?

1. Kirkpatrick Macmillan, in 1839.
2. Philip Astley, a former British armyman, in 1769.
3. Thomas Edison, on 1 February, 1893. Its name was Black Maria.
4. Sir Stamford Raffles, in 1819.
5. Lakshadweep. Population: a little over 40 lakhs. Language: Malayalam.

#### LITERATURE

1. Naguib Mahafouz, for 1988.
2. Sanskrit.
3. Telugu.
4. Tamil. The name of the grammar is *Tolkappiyam*.
5. Dogri.
6. The Rig Veda.





## WORLD OF MYTHOLOGY

# PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

King Acrisius of Argos exiled his daughter, Princess Danae, along with her infant son, because there was a prophecy that he would be killed by his daughter's son.

The princess and her son were pushed into the sea, during a storm. The waves carried the boat to the shore of the island of Seriphos.



A fisherman found the mother and the son on the shore. He led them to the king of the island who received them with affection. They were given shelter in a temple.





Years passed. The child, known as Perseus, grew up to be a brave young man, so much so that even his host, the king of the island, grew jealous of him.

One day the king invited Perseus to a very special feast. Princes who attended the feast were expected to present the host with a horse each. Perseus had none. The other guests laughed at him.



"What can I give you instead of a horse?" Perseus asked the host. "Medusa's head!" was the king's reply. Medusa was a female monster. Anybody who looked at her eyes turned into stone! Even then Perseus swore to bring the trophy!





Perseus did not know where Medusa lived, but knew where her three sisters lived. They had only one eye and one tooth, in common which they kept in a box and used by turns. Perseus hid the box—and gave it only when they told him where Medusa lived.



Perseus prayed to the gods and they gave him powers. He approached the terrible Medusa, but instead of looking at her which would have turned him into stone, he looked at her reflection on his shield.

He chopped her head off. Drops of blood flowing from the head became numerous serpents. With the head, Perseus now began his journey back to the island. Gods were helpful to him in many ways.

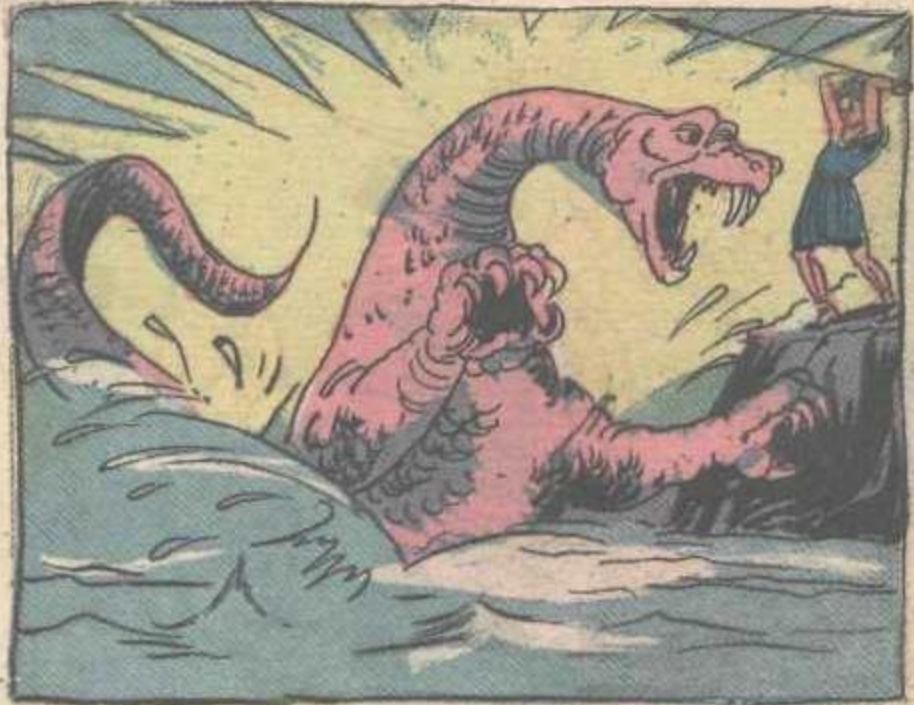






On the coast of Ethiopia he saw a beautiful damsel named Andromeda tied to a rock. A cruel sea-monster was to devour her. Her parents had no power to check the monster's design.


Perseus jumped into the sea and suddenly plunged his dagger into the right shoulder of the monster. It died after giving out a blood-curdling shout. Perseus set Andromeda free.



Parents of Andromeda were delighted. They arranged for their daughter's marriage with Perseus. It was an event of great joy for all.

*(We will know about the other adventures of Perseus in the next issue.)*





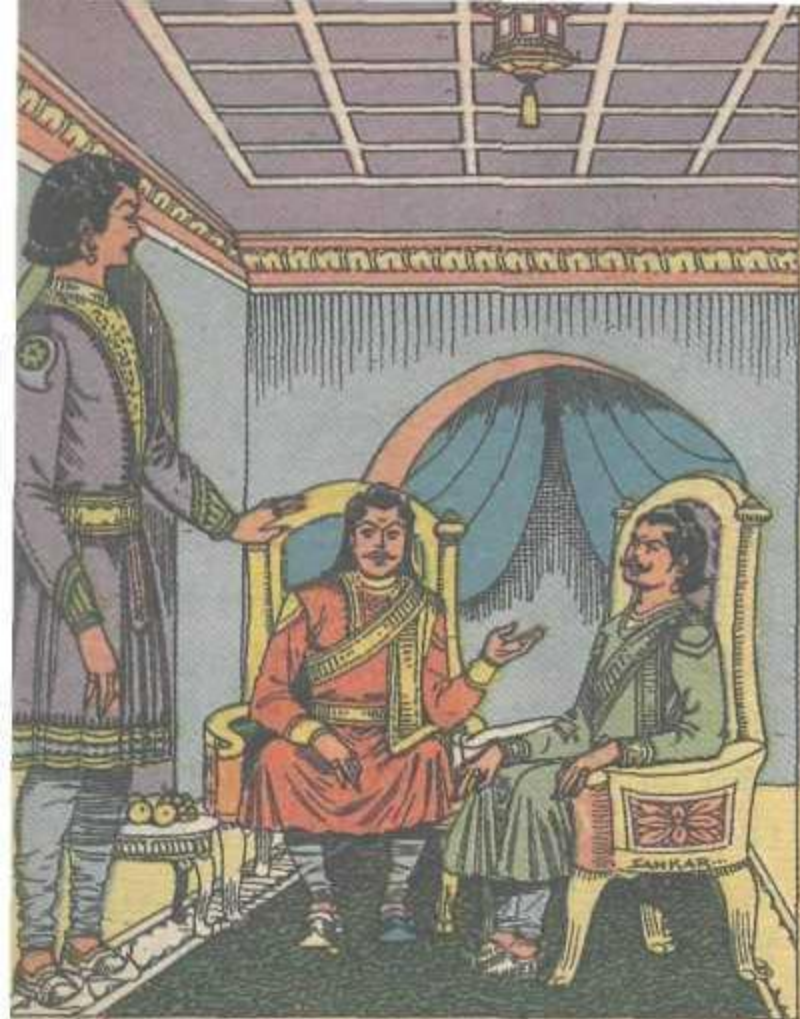
New Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire

## WAS THE PRINCESS CRAZY?

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the roars of thunder and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, perhaps you are bent upon achieving some supernatural powers in order to win a victory over your enemy. But are you sure of your own conduct even after you win the victory? Does my question sound like a puzzle to you? Let me narrate to you a certain episode that took place about a hundred years ago. That would tell you why I am





asking such a question. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.”

The vampire went on: The king of Krantipur, Viswakrant, was a good and just ruler. He had a worthy son named Chandradwip. The young man was liked by all; he was dear to the royal families around the kingdom of Krantipur.

One such kingdom was Surbhum, ruled by Suryaketu. King Suryaketu and King Viswakrant were friends. Suryaketu liked Chandrakant very much.

Suryaketu had a daughter named Kirtimanjari. “My child,”

one day Suryaketu asked her, “what is your impression of Prince Chandradwip?”

“He is fine, I believe!” said the princess.

A week later Suryaketu met Viswakrant. “My friend,” he said, “I would like your son Chandradwip to marry my daughter Kirtimanjari. What is your reaction to my proposal?”

Viswakrant clapped his hands and said with enthusiasm, “I am delighted!” He then summoned the prince and said, “My son, I am arranging for your marriage with Princess Kirtimanjari. This is for your information.”

“Thanks, father, but...”

The prince hesitated and lowered his head.

“What is the matter with you, my son?” his father asked, quite surprised.

“Father, I would like to marry Princess Sukanti of Ujjayini!” said the prince.

There was a total silence for a moment. Then King Viswakrant said, “It is all right, my son, I do not wish to impose my will on you. You may go.”

“Wait!” said King Suryaketu gravely. The prince stopped. “Your refusal will be a shock for





my daughter. I suggest that you marry her, even if you marry Princess Sukanti."

"Thanks for your kind offer, my lord, but that would not be possible," said the prince and he went away.

"Hm. You have to pay for your audacity dearly," said King Suryaketu as he walked out in a huff. Despite his host's request to pardon his son, the angry king climbed his chariot and left for his kingdom.

The very next day King Suryaketu declared war against Krantipur. King Viswakrant got ready to lead his army for defence, but the prince said, "Father, since I am the cause of King Suryaketu's attack, I would like to lead our army. But the best course of action would be to avoid a war and the loss of life that is bound to take place if there is a war."

"How to do that?" asked the king.

"I propose a single combat. I will represent our side. Let them choose someone to represent their side," said the prince.

King Viswakrant approved the idea. The proposal was duly



conveyed to King Suryaketu. There was no question of Suryaketu backing out, because that would amount to his admitting that there was nobody in his camp to match Prince Chandradwip. But, King Suryaketu put forth this condition: if the prince is defeated, he would be obliged to marry Princess Kirtimanjari. If he does not, he would lose his throne; Krantipur would become a part of the kingdom of Surbhum after King Viswakrant's death. If the prince wins, half of Surbhum would be given over to Krantipur.



Although Suryaketu accepted the challenge and gave his own conditions, he was pensive. There was nobody in his camp to face a skilled warrior like Prince Chandradwip.

The developments saddened Princess Kirtimanjari. Her father had declared war without her knowledge. But it was because of her. She too did not wish any bloodshed to take place. But what can she do? An idea came to her all on a sudden. There was a great hermit in the nearby forest. He was gifted with many magical powers. He was most favourably inclined towards the royal family and he treated the princess like

his own child.

The princess met him alone and placed her problem before him and said, "Sir, I would like to fight myself. I am good at fencing, but I am afraid, I may not be a match for Prince Chandradwip. Kindly help me."

The hermit sat meditatively for an hour and then said, "My child, I will teach a hymn to you. If you mumble that during the combat, your sword would move at the speed of lightning."

The princess returned to her father and told him about the boon she had received. The king was happy. He had no objection to the princess representing his





side. It was decided that she would fight in the guise of a young man.

The combat began. At first Prince Chandradwip was found to be far superior to his opponent. But soon the disguised princess began mumbling the hymn. In no time the situation changed. The way the princess handled her sword puzzled the prince. Suddenly, at a terrific blow from the princess, he lost grip over his sword. It fell off his hand. He was taken prisoner.

The prince conceded defeat. He was asked if he was willing to marry Princess Kirtimanjari. But he frankly said that he would not

mind losing the throne for the sake of marrying Princess Sukanti.

The news reached the king of Ujjayini, the father of Princess Sukanti. He immediately set out to attack Surbhum. He was bent upon freeing his would-be son-in-law.

King Suryaketu told his daughter, "Don't worry. We can easily defeat the army of Ujjayani."

"Father, I would like to see Prince Chandradwip married to Princess Sukanti. Let us set the prince free," said Princess Kirtimanjari. "As you please, my daughter!" was King Suryaketu's response.







Accordingly a message was sent to the King of Ujjayini. It was also announced to all concerned that Prince Chandradwip had not been defeated in a normal way. The one who fought him was Princess Kirtimanjari and she defeated him by the power of a hymn. Hence she cannot be called victorious.

Indeed, the marriage between Prince Chandradwip and Princess Sukanti was celebrated under the direct supervision of Princess Kirtimanjari.

The vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of

King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, how could Princess Kirtimanjari change her mind so quickly? Was she crazy? Is it for this that she took such sincere and daring steps to face the prince in a single combat? How is it that her father, King Suryaketu, agreed to her suggestions so readily? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith answered King Vikram, "Princess Kirtimanjari was a sensible girl. There is nothing to show that she had any particular desire to marry Prince Chandradwip. It is her father who wanted it. It is to save her father's prestige that she took the daring step to face the prince in a single combat. When the prince was ready to sacrifice his throne for the sake of marrying Princess Sukanti, she realised that the prince really loved Princess Sukanti. She was happy. Her happiness was expressed through her taking the initiative in arranging their marriage. The





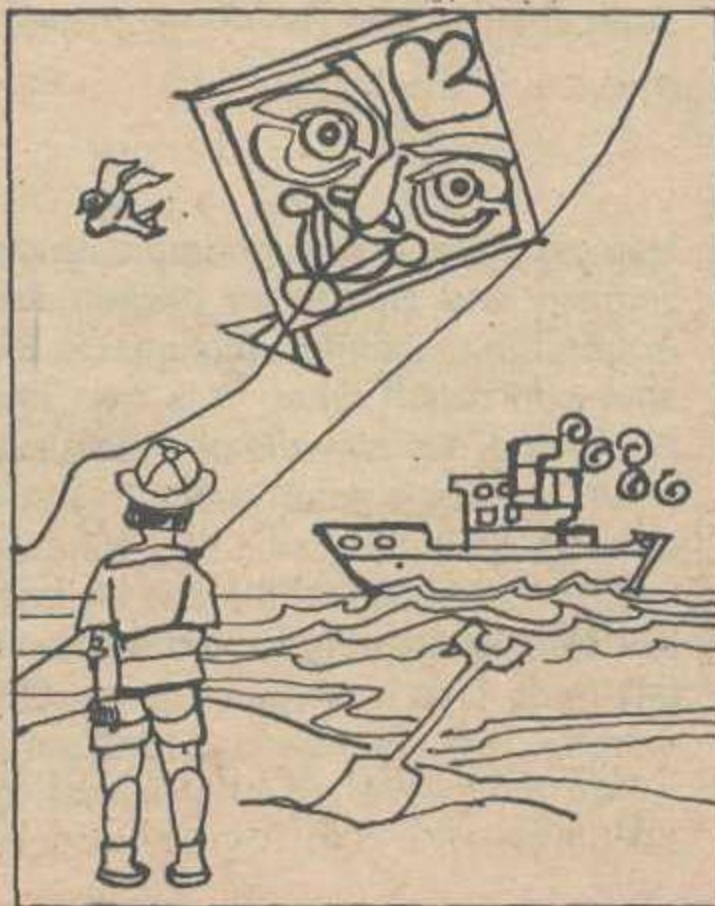
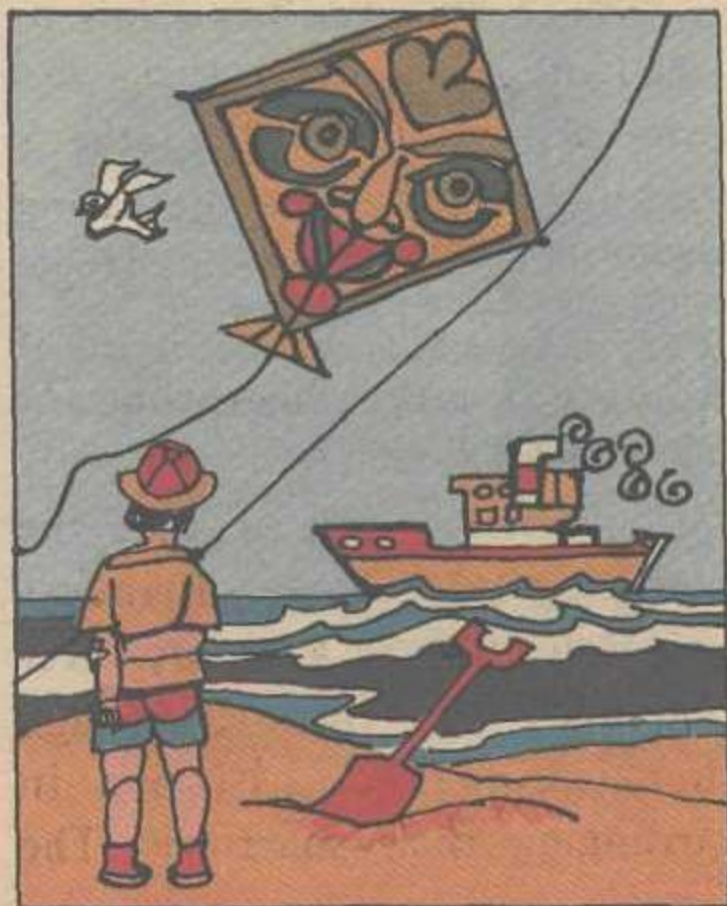


king readily agreed to his daughter's suggestion because he was after all a friend of King Viswak-rant. It was a momentary wrath that had made him declare war

against him."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS







**"A.D" or *Anno Domini* means in the year of our Lord. That is to say, from the year of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time, we read that Jesus was born in 4 B.C. How to explain this discrepancy?**

**—T.K. Roy, Katni**

Dionysius Exiguus who lived in the early sixth century, fixed the date of Jesus Christ's birth. According to his calculation the years are counted as A.D. or B.C. But scholars agree that his calculation was not correct and he advanced the date by about four years. However, nobody is certain about the exact date of Christ's birth.

**Both Jainism and Buddhism preach non-violence. Where do they differ?**

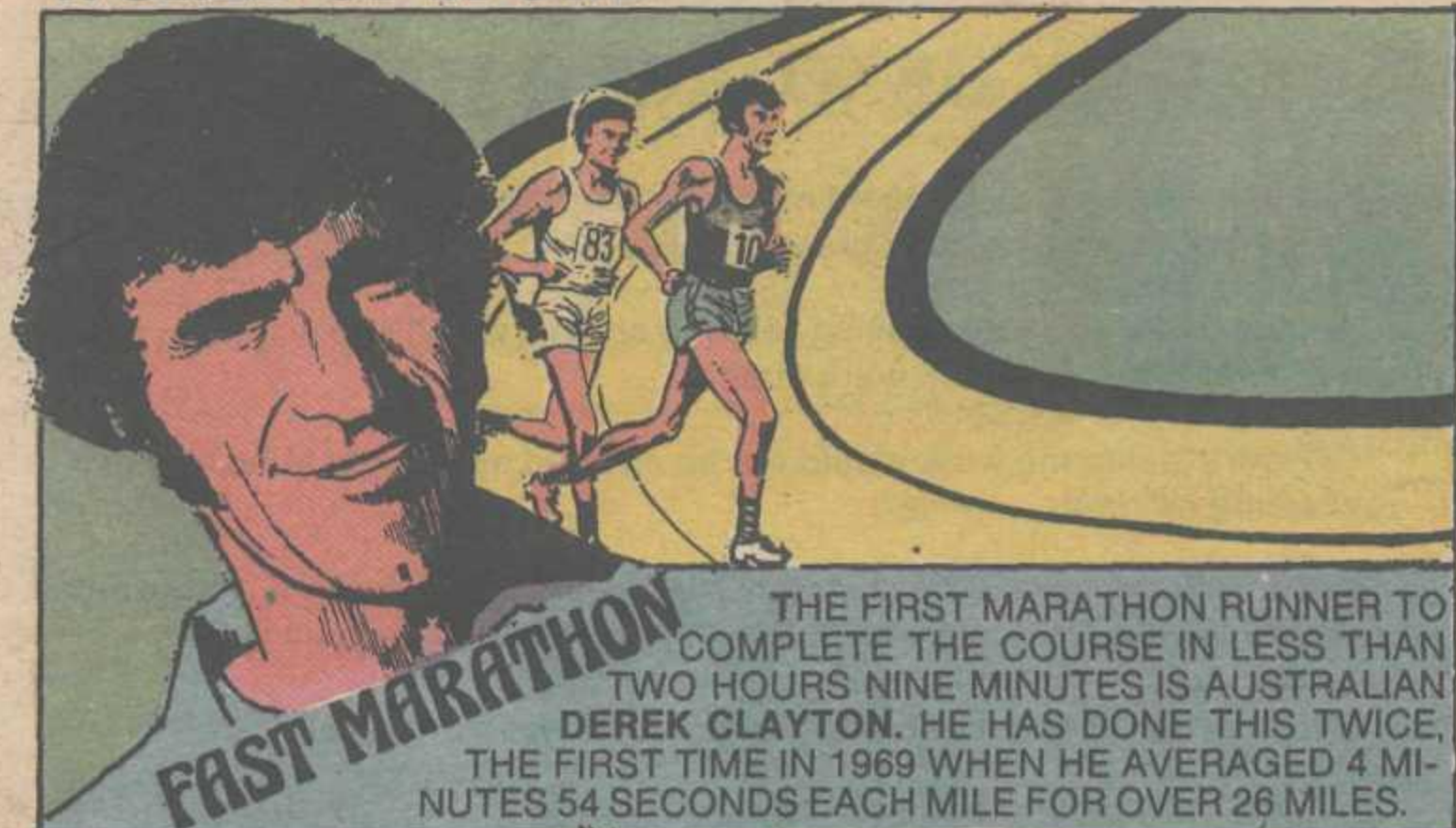
**—Aparajita Chakraborty,  
Dombivli**

Non-violence is one principle among several other principles which both Jainism and Buddhism preach for attainment of the final goal of life. According to Jainism, this goal is *Siddha Sila* or the abode of bliss that the soul can reach when it is free from the need for rebirth. According to Buddhism, it is *Nirvana* or a total extinction of one's existence.

While there is much similarity between the two great faiths, there are also differences in the paths they follow. So far as non-violence is concerned, Jainism believes that there is life and sensation not only in all the creatures but also in the plants and hence the Jains must forbear from harming anything. This is an extreme position. Jainism preaches asceticism to an extreme point, whereas Buddhism prescribes a middle path, by taking to which the seeker should neither look for comfort nor torment his body deliberately.



# WORLD OF SPORT

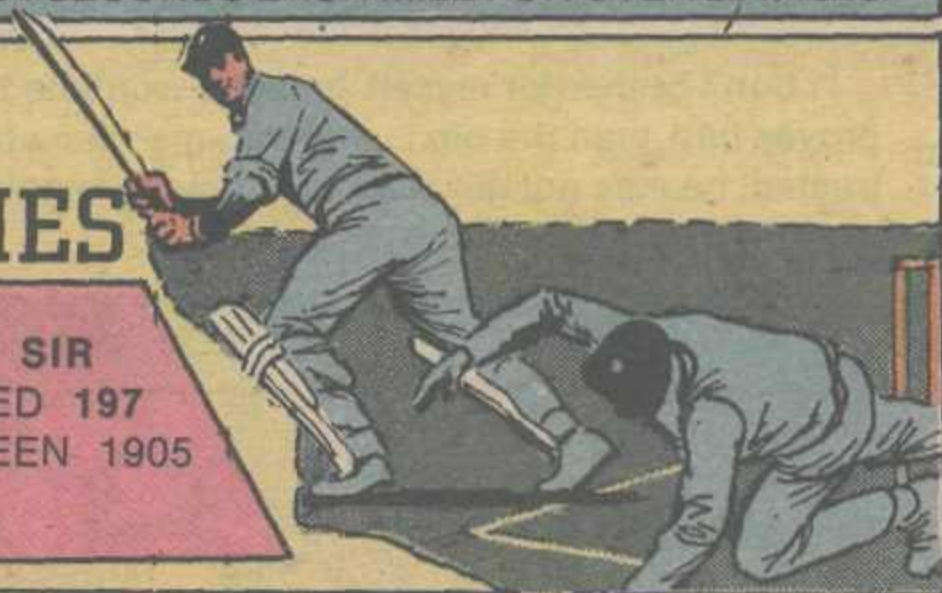


## FAST MARATHON

THE FIRST MARATHON RUNNER TO COMPLETE THE COURSE IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS NINE MINUTES IS AUSTRALIAN DEREK CLAYTON. HE HAS DONE THIS TWICE, THE FIRST TIME IN 1969 WHEN HE AVERAGED 4 MINUTES 54 SECONDS EACH MILE FOR OVER 26 MILES.

## 197 CENTURIES

ENGLISH CRICKETER SIR JACK HOBBS SCORED 197 CENTURIES BETWEEN 1905 AND 1934.



THE FIRST RADIO-CONTROLLED MODEL POWER-BOAT TO CROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL WAS THE 5FT (1.5M) 'MISS E.D.' IN 1951. THE JOURNEY TOOK NINE HOURS AND NINE MINUTES AT AN AVERAGE SPEED OF 4 MPH (6 KM/H)



## ACROSS THE CHANNEL



# WHY HE WORKED HARD

A poor man sat on the pavement repairing the umbrellas of passers-by. He did his work thoroughly, with great devotion.

Another man who was relaxing, leaning against a wall and watching him, asked him, "Why don't you work faster?"

"If I work faster, the work would not be as good as it ought to be," calmly replied the umbrella-mender.

"What difference would that make?" asked the other man again, "Can the umbrella-owners immediately find out if the work is defective?"

"No, they won't find it out until perhaps the next monsoon."

"Then? Why do you bother?"

"I don't bother for myself. In fact, I won't be here for long. But if my work proves bad, then the next umbrella-mender who would sit here may not be trusted; he may not get many customers," explained the umbrella-mender.







5

*(Encouraged by Rama, Sugriva, challenged Vali to a combat. He expected Rama to kill Vali. But as Rama did not do so, he retreated. Rama explained to him that he could not be distinguished from his brother and advised him to put on a garland.)*

**W**ith the garland around his neck, Sugriva advanced towards Kiskindhya, accompanied by Lakshmana. He was followed by Rama armed with his bow, Hanuman and others.

They had to pass through a dense forest. Rama became curious to know the history of the forest.

Said Sugriva, "Once upon a time there was an Ashram here. Its environment abounded in trees yielding a variety of sweet fruits and fragrant flowers. The Ashram had been founded by a sage named Saptajana. After he departed to heaven, nobody could enter this area for a long time—not even birds and beasts.

**END OF THE VALI-SUGRIVA CONFLICT**



Those who entered never came out. One could hear the songs of the nymphs and the rhythm of their dance emanating from the area which by and by turned into a forest. One could smell excellent fragrance too. Smoke was seen coiling up the tree-tops indicating that some invisible beings were performing some rites inside the forest."

Rama and Lakshmana respectfully bowed to the memory of Sage Saptajana.

On arriving at Kiskindhya, all but Sugriva hid behind some trees. Sugriva went forward and called Vali aloud. Then he turned

to Rama and reminded him once more of his promise to act on time.

"Now that you have put on a garland, I will have no difficulty in recognising you. Do not nurture any doubt on my assurance to you. I will kill Vali all right. I've never made a false promise. I will not do so in future either. Go forward and throw your challenge at Vali," said Rama.

Thus encouraged, Sugriva gave out a lusty shout which echoed against Vali's castle and re-echoed in the mountains behind it. Birds tittered and





animals ran away from the nearby forests.

Vali heard the shout while lying in bed. He was furious. He immediately prepared to come out, mumbling, "It is time I silence the audacious Sugriva once for all."

But his wife, Tara, checked him, saying, "You must not care to respond to Sugriva's challenge at this hour of the night. Wait till it is morning. It is a question of prudence and caution. How is it that Sugriva, who had fled, defeated by you, only a while

ago, is back again? This means meanwhile he has been assured of somebody's help. He is not a fool. Before he decided to return, he must have made himself doubly sure of the strength of his helper. His helper may be stronger than you. I heard from Angada that Rama and Lakshmana, the sons of King Dasharatha, are camping at the Rushyamuk hills. Sugriva might have befriended them. Rama is a great hero. It is he who killed Viradha, Khara, Dushana and Kavandha."

As Vali seemed to ignore







Tara's advice, she said again, "It will be wiser on your part to strike a compromise with Sugriva. Why to incur the wrath of Rama? After all Sugriva is your own brother. You will lose nothing by offering him his lost position, that of the crown prince."

But Vali paid no heed to Tara's advice. "Your words make no sense," he said. "How can I think of any compromise at a moment when Sugriva is challenging me to a fight? It is better to die than to bow down to such audacity. You are afraid of Rama. But why should he come to interfere in our

affair? Of course, you are concerned about my safety. But do not worry. I will defeat Sugriva in no time and return. I will not kill him, but will let him go bearing a few unforgettable blows."

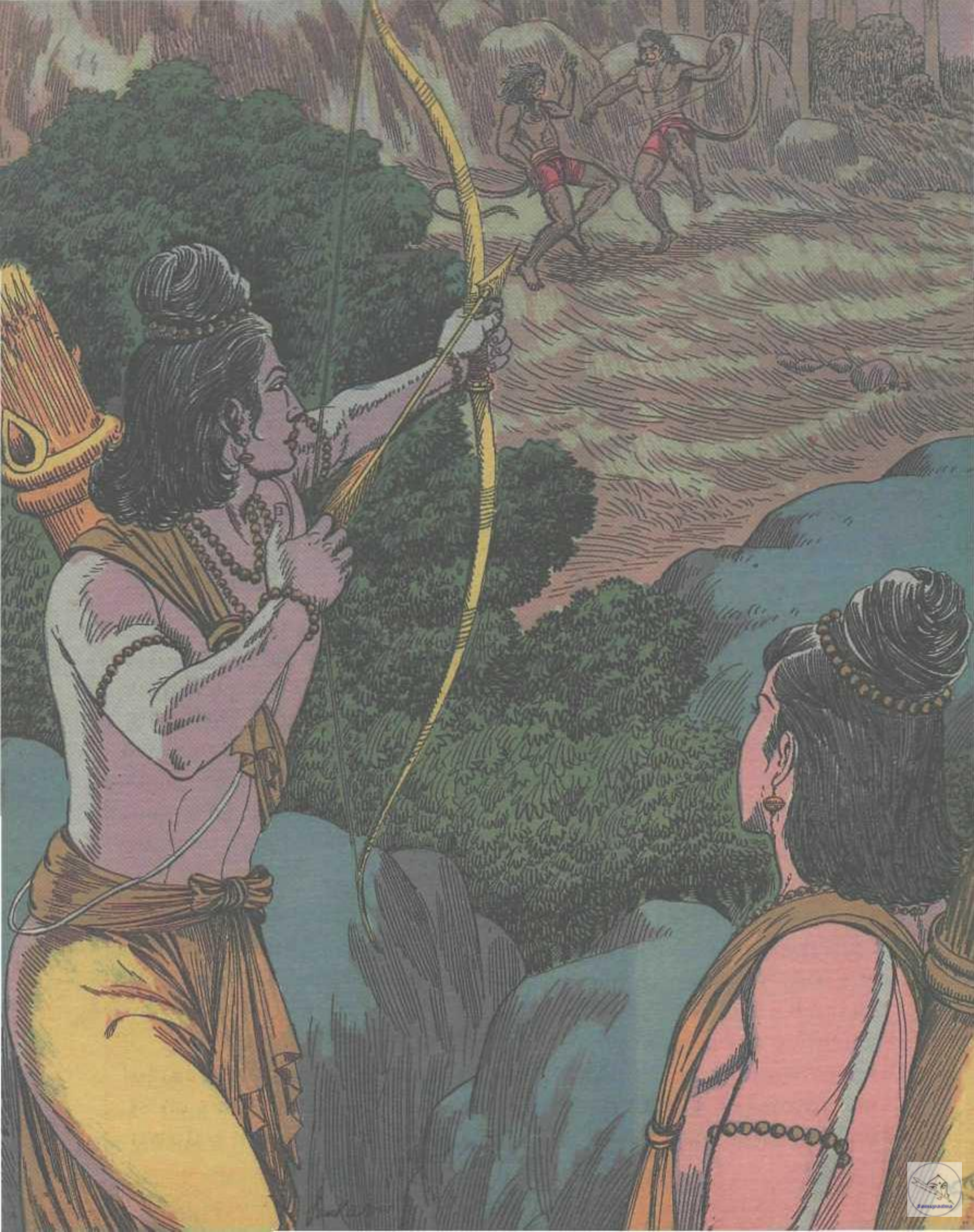
Tara realised that it would be fruitless to argue with Vali. She recited some hymns for his safety and encircled him a few times. She and her maids looked on while Vali left.

Soon Vali met Sugriva who stood ready to face him. Before long both pounced upon each other and were locked in a terrific wrestle.

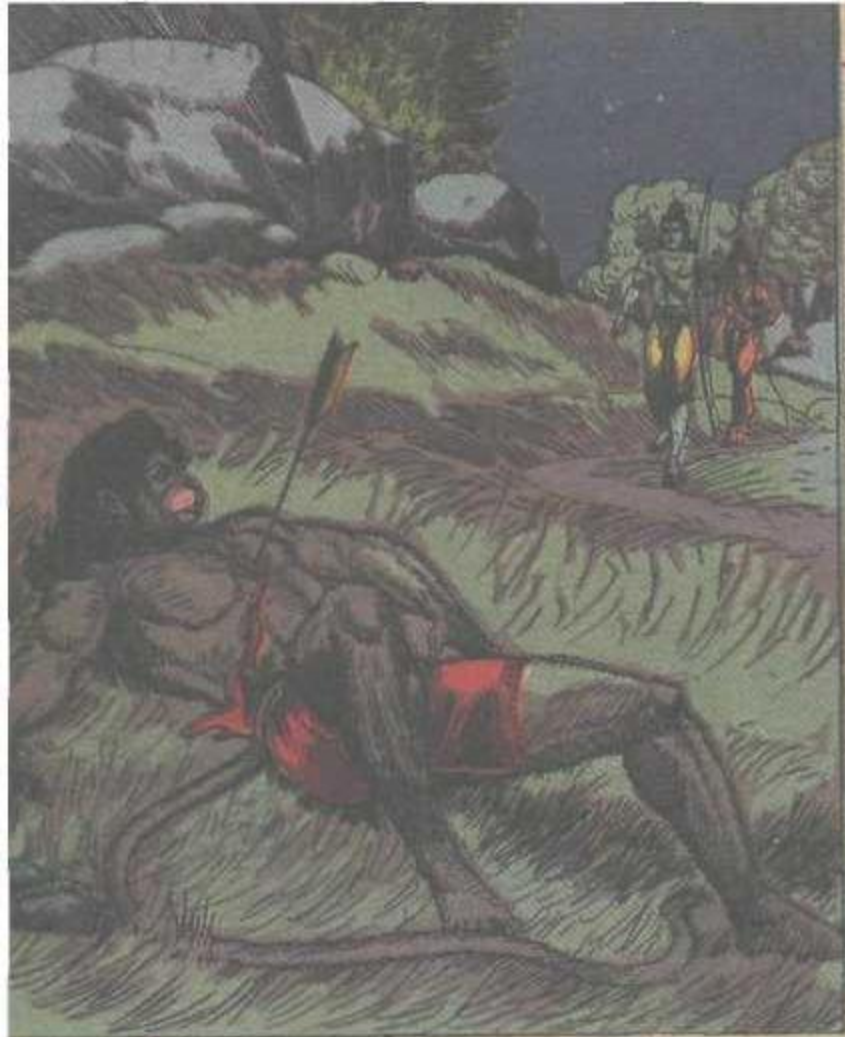
After a while Sugriva uprooted a tree and attacked Vali with it. That put Vali in the defensive for a moment. But soon he recouped and fought with greater vehemence. As moments passed, Sugriva was found proving weaker.

When Rama saw Sugriva's condition, he took aim at Vali without any further delay and shot his arrow. The arrow swished forth like a string of lightning, making a fearful sound, and pierced Vali's chest. Stunned, Vali fell down.









But Vali did not die immediately. It was because of a protective necklace given to him by Indra. He looked in the direction from which the arrow had come. Rama and Lakshmana soon came closer to him. Looking at Rama, Vali said:

“Rama! You are that son of a celebrated king. You are not only the scion of a great family, but also a prince renowned for character and courage. Even so, you shot the arrow at me while I was entangled in a fight with my adversary. Is this a proof of your greatness? I thought that

you had all the virtues of an ideal prince, like control over impulse, large-heartedness, tolerance, respect for truth, so on and so forth. Hence, despite Tara’s warning, I had accepted Sugri-va’s challenge. I had hardly any idea that you were capable of stooping so low as to shoot at me from hiding. I had never done any harm to you or your kingdom. I had never insulted you nor had challenged you to a fight. How could you attack me? I don’t think that you could have done it for the sport of hunting. For, neither my skin nor my hair, neither my flesh nor my bone would be of any use to you. A man like you does not deserve a throne. I shudder to think that you could be the son of King Dasharatha. How can you explain your conduct? It would have been fitting if you had proved your strength to Ravana. If you had asked me for help, I would have rescued your wife in no time. To kill someone from hiding is easy enough. But what you have done is unjust and treacherous.”

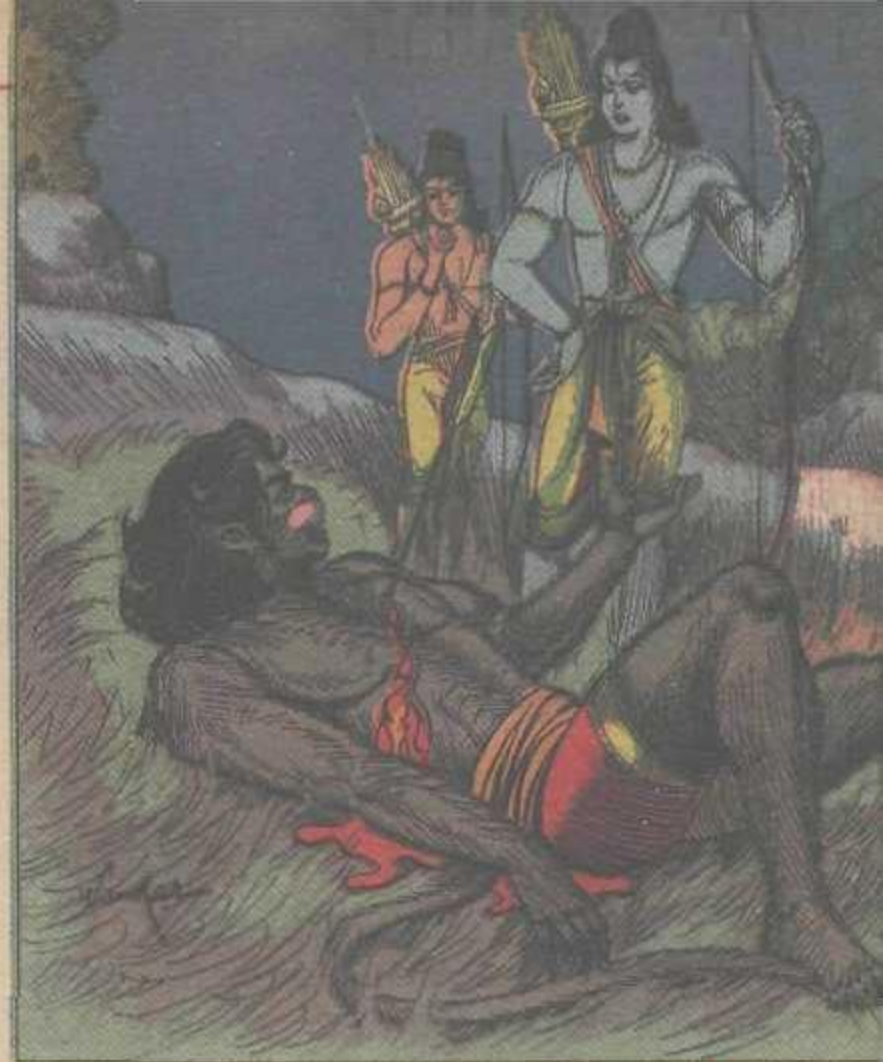
Vali began to show signs of exhaustion. Then Rama answered him, “You are accusing me





without realising the code of conduct I follow or the justification I have for my action. I hail from the dynasty of the Ikshvakus who are the rulers of the world. At the moment Bharata is the king and I am his viceroy, wandering about to protect the just or oppressed from the tyranny of the unjust. You have broken the very basic law of dharma. A younger brother is to be looked upon as a son. But you took away your younger brother's wife. You deserved this punishment, on account of that sin. My attitude towards Sugriva is similar to my attitude towards Lakshmana. Hence I deemed it my duty to relieve Sugriva of his anguish. True, I have killed you from hiding. But that is of no consequence. After all, people resort to so many means to capture or kill animals. Your flesh is of no use to me. But hunters do not kill for gathering food alone."

Vali told Rama, once again, "I am not sorry because I am going to die. I have nothing to worry about Tara and other dependants either. But I feel deeply concerned about Angada. He was extremely fond of me. He will be



completely upset. Please treat him kindly. Also see that Tara is not maltreated by Sugriva."

Rama assured Vali that his requests will be complied with. Vali soon lost consciousness.

When Tara heard of the tragedy she was overwhelmed with sorrow and she rushed out of the castle followed by Angada. Several well-wishers advised her not to risk her own life. "Save Angada and save yourself. Shut the castle doors and perform the necessary rites for Angada's coronation. Otherwise you might be imprisoned or thrown out by





the enemy," they said.

"I don't care for my son or myself or the kingdom. What value have these to me if my husband is dead? I must go near him," Tara replied, crying.

She soon reached the spot where Vali lay surrounded by Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and others. As Tara sat down near Vali and broke down, it was difficult for Sugriva to control his tears. Hanuman consoled Tara, "We all have to die in course of time. Mourning does no good either to the dead or

to the mourner. Stop worrying and do the needful to bring up Angada as a worthy son of Vali. In future he must shoulder the burden of the kingdom, under your guardianship. Now, we must arrange for the funeral of Vali."

"Hanuman! It is impossible for me to think of such issues at the moment. The only urge I feel now is to depart to the domain of death along with Vali," Tara said.

**—To continue**

*He is the best physician that knows the worthlessness of the most medicines.*

**—Benjamin Franklin**





## THE THREE CLEVER FRIENDS

Once upon a time in a quiet hamlet there were three great friends. They lived in little houses of their own a furlong away from one another. Every week-end as the sun dipped over the western hills and the sky turned a tender rose, they gathered under their favourite Cherry tree. The sweet twittering of the birds flying homewards, the gurgle of the brook merrily wending its way and the occasional thunderclaps always filled them with delight. In fact, they derived more pleasure from the sounds of Nature than from the beautiful landscape all around. For alas, all the three companions had extremely bad eyesight.

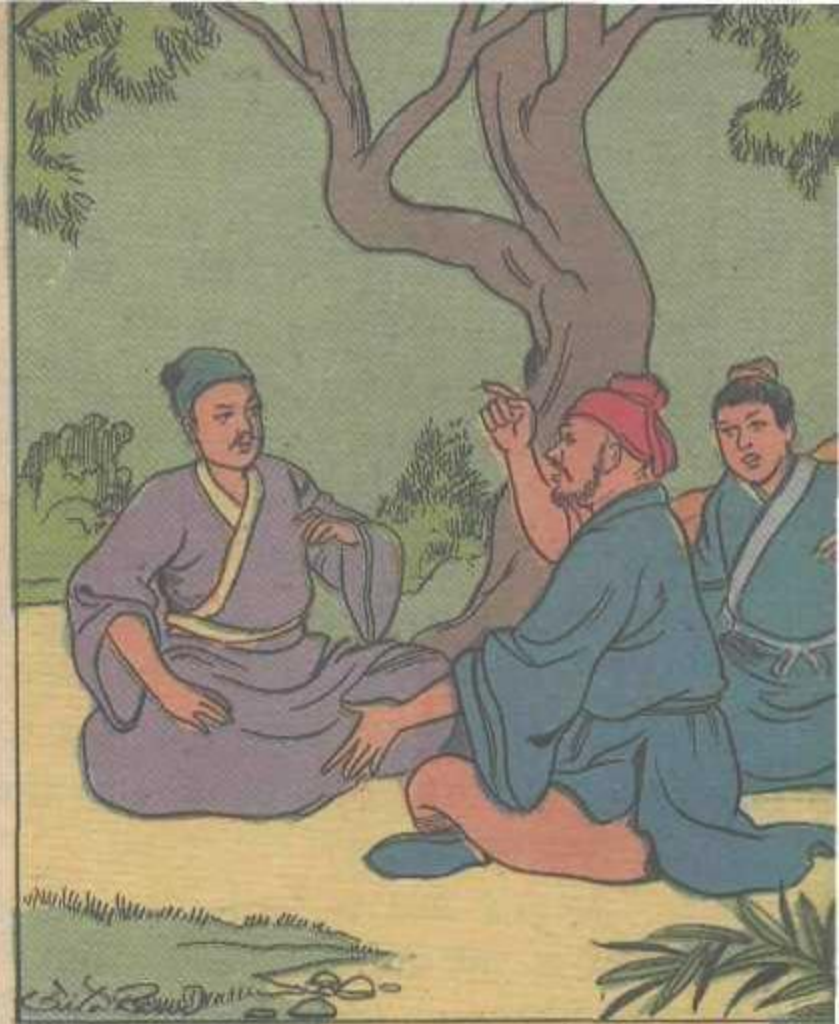
They loved hot tea and chatted on till the moon shone bright and clear. Often their conversation came round to their eyesight.

"Do you know," proudly declared Master Zhang, "lately

my vision has improved so much that the other day, at noon, I could easily make out some stars twinkling in the sky."

"Is it so?" exclaimed Master Zhung. "But Brother, can you now locate the wee nest of Robin Redbreast high up on that tall tall tree? Look! How lovingly the mother-bird is feeding her chicks with those tiny yellow seeds!"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Master Zhing. "Stop bragging, both of you. Brother Zhang, have you forgotten so soon how once you called someone deaf in the Park for not answering to your question, whereas it was a statue? And when a crow which had





alighted on its head flew off, you triumphantly chuckled, 'Now your hat has blown off, but I'll not tell you!' Remember?"

"And now brother Zhung," he continued, "don't you remember bumping several times into a buffalo? I wonder how you both can claim to see stars in daylight and grains of seed on the tree-top! Should we have a wager to find out who amongst us has the sharpest vision?"

"That's not a bad idea! But what is the nature of the bet?" asked his two friends.

"Tomorrow, at the crack of dawn, the priest will instal an

important tablet at the temple entrance. Whosoever amongst us can see it most distinctly will be treated by the others to sumptuous meals," proposed Master Zhing, who always considered himself the wisest of the three.

Midnight struck. A chill wind blew over the quiet village. But Master Zhang could not get a wink of sleep. "What if I'm unable to see the tablet clearly? I can't let my friends know that my eyesight is that poor!" thought he.

Quietly sneaking out of the house he made his way towards the temple. Tap, tap, tap, thrice





he knocked on the heavy wooden door. The priest who was up for his midnight prayers, opened it and recognised the face, raising his lantern high.

"Master Zhang, what brings you here at this unearthly hour?" he asked, rather surprised.

"I hear you're putting up a tablet tomorrow at dawn. Would you mind telling me what is inscribed on it?" said the oldest of the friends, almost running out of breath.

"Yes, the tablet is donated by one of our blind patrons and the inscription runs thus,

*O Eyes, see what thou ought to;*

*O Sightless, do not despair."*

"Thank you, thank you very much," said Master Zhang excitedly. He hurried down the steps and disappeared before the priest could tell him the whole inscription.

The second friend, Master Zhung, could not sleep either. He was afraid he wouldn't be able to read the inscription and others would make fun of him. He turned round the alley to the temple as Master Zhang shuffled past him on his way home. Neither saw the other—that's how good their eyesight was!

The priest who had just got







under his warm quilt heard someone calling, "Reverend! Reverend!"

"Please do come in Master Zhung and take your seat," said the priest, opening the door.

"It's indeed kind of you. I shan't take much of your precious time. All I would like to know is what's written on the tablet you're going to put up tomorrow," he said, ears cocked up.

*"O Eyes see what thou ought to;  
O Sightless do not despair,  
Hearken the doves sweetly coo,  
Look within and find Me there."*  
said the priest wondering what was going on.

But the second friend was more cautious than the first one. "The tablet is of what colour?" he asked.

"The characters are of gold on a dark blue background," replied the priest patiently.

"Accept my sincere salutations. See you tomorrow," bowing, Master Zhung left as the Priest looked on puzzled.

The poor guardian of the temple had just fallen asleep when there was yet another knock on the door. It was the third friend, Master Zhing.

No sooner had the visitor put his question than the priest blurted out the whole inscription including the colour of the tablet and that of the characters.

But Master Zhing being the youngest of the three was smarter. "Anything more written above or below?" he asked.

"Well, above is engraved a flying white dove with beautiful beady eyes and below is written 'The Voice of the God of Vision.' That is all," replied the priest feeling more and more bewildered.

The next day, well before the first crowing of the cocks, while the dew was still fresh on the





leaves, the three great friends, hand in hand, paced their way to the temple. All of a sudden Master Zhang stopped and said, "Let's not advance any further, for then the tablet will be as clear as day to everybody!"

In fact they were still quite some distance away from the temple.

"What a lovely piece of workmanship!" the first friend continued,

*"O Eyes, see what thou ought to;  
O Sightless, do not despair."*

"Brother Zhang, you've certainly improved your eyesight. Perhaps the next two lines are written in smaller characters. That is why you're unable to see them. Listen while I read them, *"Hearken the doves sweetly coo,  
Look within and find Me there."* The characters are of gold on a dark blue background."

The first friend was floored. "It was really stupid of me not to ask the priest any further," he silently scolded himself.

The third friend who was quiet all this while said in a confident tone, "There is no doubt that Brother Zhung has a far better vision than Brother Zhang. Till now both of you have indeed seen



very accurately. But would you mind describing what is there above and below the inscription?"

There followed a total silence, for the first two friends had not cared to inquire about these details.

"Well, above is engraved a white dove with widespread wings and below is written in letters of gold, 'The Voice of the God of Vision.' I've won the bet for I can see most distinctly. Who is going to treat me first?" asked Master Zhing jubilantly.

Soon there was a quarrel. Master Zhang claimed that since





he was the first to read the inscription his sight is better than the others. The second friend, Master Zhung, at once bellowed back saying that he was the one to distinguish the details of the colours besides reading the second part of the verse. The third claimed that he had been able to see and read what others could not.

"What's the matter, gentlemen?"

It was the priest. The three wrangling friends at once rushed to him. They requested him to decide who had won the bet.

The priest gave an amused smile. The mystery of his nocturnal visitors became clear to him.

"I'm sorry to inform you, gentlemen, that all of you have lost. I'm the one who should be now treated to sumptuous

meals."

"How?" demanded the three friends.

"You all came a bit too early. I'm just going to put up the tablet now," revealed the priest pointing at a big rectangular thing under his arm.

The three great friends silently walked back home. During their tea sessions under the Cherry tree they never again discussed their eyesight. For the inscription on the tablet had made them wiser. As the moonlight streaked in through the leaves they recited the four lines to one another.

*"O Eyes, see what thou ought to;  
O Sightless do not despair,  
Hearken the doves sweetly coo,  
Look within and find Me there."*

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das





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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Noble blood is an accident of fortune; noble actions characterise the great.

—*Goldoni*

Money is a good servant but a bad master.

—*Quoted by Bacon*

Grammar is the logic of speech, even as logic is the grammar of reason.

—*Trench*



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